

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MAHARASHTRA

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

The unit aims to make you understand the Political Economy of Maharashtra. After studying this unit, you may be able to –

- Know about the nexus between politics and business organizations in the state of Maharashtra.
- Understand the Politics of Co-operatives in Maharashtra with special reference to Sugar Co-operatives.
- Assess the Land issues in Maharashtra in Rural and Urban areas.

1.1 INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS POLITICAL ECONOMY?

Political Economy studies the relationship between politics and economics. It deals with those power relations associated with the production, consumption, and distribution of resources. Political and

economic interests are interlinked especially in the governance and decision-making process. The study which constitutes all these components is known as Political Economy. This module specifically talks about the political economy of the state of Maharashtra. It covers business and politics in Maharashtra, the relationship and the nexus between the two, the politics of sugar co-operatives, and several land issues in the urban and rural sectors. Let's look at all these aspects one by one.

1.2 BUSINESS AND POLITICS

1.2.1 Nexus between Business and Politics:

The relationship between business and politics is one of the most critically examined areas in Indian politics. The business class has become hegemonic in nature mainly due to the evolving nature between the two. Initially, the business class worked as an interest group. Their primary role was to influence the decision-making process. But, gradually it has started asserting its power. It became so influential that it has achieved the status of virtual decision-maker. Politicians started falling prey to their demands. Over the period, business class has become an important part of the policy-making program of the government. Today, the state has come under the influence of the dominant class i.e. the business class.

Nowadays, the political class is dependent on the business class. It raises a critical question on the autonomy of the state and its functioning. The increasing dependence of the political class on the business class can be evident in the adoption of the liberal democratic model in the country. Elections are an important component of a democratic system of governance. It is an expensive affair that requires a lot of finance. Financer is always ready to provide the required money in politics but only on the terms suited to their interests. In this way, the nexus between business and politics has evolved over the years. This nexus resulted in the marginalization of the masses. People have protested against it. But, such protests were only occasional due to which the nexus is growing even stronger.

Traditionally speaking, business class constitutes people engaged in trade, commerce, and industry. Now, even the category of professionals has been added to the business class. The informal sector in the economy is growing rapidly. The mafias involved in these sectors are powerful and enjoy the patronage of the political class. So, now the business class involves people from organized, unorganized, informal as well as criminal sectors. They have all the financial resources and therefore control a proportionate share of power. They exert their influence on the political class thereby becoming a hegemonic class.

1.2.2 Evolving pattern of the relation between Business and Politics in Maharashtra:

Before India's independence, Indian National Congress was a mass movement to achieve India's independence. This movement was led by

M.K. Gandhi. Civilians have contributed in their capacity to the funds required for the movement. This method of collecting the funds has helped mobilize people at large and also helped in imbibing nationalistic sentiments among the people. However, this does not mean that the traditional business class has no connection with the Indian National Congress. It has been evident that the Indian Chamber of Commerce is linked with the Indian National Congress since 1907. The industrial class has always been supportive of Congress. Congress has advocated for the “Swadeshi” i.e. the use of local products and a ban on foreign goods. This has helped the business community to a great extent.

The Chamber of Commerce has participated in the presidential address of Congress. They have always extended their support to the national movement. Business organizations such as Birla and Bajaj had close connections with the INC. But, they never tried to misuse Congress. Even INC never allowed the business class to make use of them. So, in the Pre-Independence era, the relationship between the business class and the political class was cordial. This relationship has evolved over the years. Let's try to understand the evolution with the following heads:

Business class as an Interest Group:

The decision taken by the government affects various sections of society. Not every section of society gets equal benefits from the government. Therefore, each tries to exert its influence to safeguard its interests. A business class like any other section of society tries to articulate its interests to the political class. They form pressure groups/ Interest groups to achieve their objective. With the help of such organized grouping, they try to influence the decision of the government. Moreover, they encompass a lot of resources which enables them to that capability to influence the decisions of the government.

The relationship between the business and political class started developing when the Congress government introduced the five-year planning system in India. It became closed by the second five-year plan which focused more on industrial development in the country. Here, business class as an interest group played an important role to influence the policy-making process. They were successful in promoting and protecting their interests in this era.

Business class as a political Party:

In the Post-Independence era, the Congress government adopted several policies favoring the poor people in India. They have also started with the process of land reforms. This has disturbed the former rulers of the princely states and rich landlords. Specific business enterprises were advocating for the laisses-faire state i.e. non-intervention of the state in the economy of a country was against such an approach of the government. There were differences of opinion in the congress party too which led to the faction in the party. C. Rajagopalachari left Congress and formed his own ‘Swatantra Party’. Here, the Business community remained out of this and played the role of an Interest group. But, some of them were

interested to join Swatantra Party. The party remained active till the 1970s. Its electoral performance was too poor and it lost its distinct identity after the formation of the Janata party in 1977.

Some business enterprises were associated with the Congress, some supported the Bharatiya Janata Party. It's significant to note that the business class preferred to influence the election by supporting a political party from outside rather than forming their political party and contesting elections. Because they were completely aware of the fact that they lack the numerical strength required to win the elections. Co-operative Capitalists in Maharashtra have captured control over financial institutions. They started exerting their influence over the sugar belt in Maharashtra. In a way, they have become very influential as far as Maharashtra Politics is concerned.

Business Class as a Political Financer:

Even the field of politics has not been left without the use of money power. The use of money power is visible at the time of elections. It aims to influence the election results. The academic sphere has always discouraged this practice. But with every passing year, elections are becoming more and more expensive in nature. The elections held immediately after the independence of India did not involve such a large extent of the use of money power. Congress has fairly managed the situation without the use of money power. But, since the first general elections, the population of our country has been on the rise continuously. To deal with the continuously increasing levels of the population the previous methods of raising finance were found to be inadequate. Party managers were struggling to deal with the issues of political finance.

Before 1967, political funds were collected by the parties from authorized people. Even the candidates were chosen if they could finance themselves. But, from 1967 onwards there emerged new strategies to deal with this issue and the 1971 elections institutionalized the new culture of political finance. Candidates were chosen not based on their financial viability but on their ability to win the elections. This has resulted in a decrease in the percentage of candidates who can finance themselves in elections. Now, the party started financing their candidates if they can win the election. This led to an increase in the demand for political finances. Congress party has also started looking at this issue very critically. It no longer remained a party for small contributors. The funds for the congress party come from three main sources: Businessmen who get some favours in return, then some traditional industrial enterprises donate to the party based on goodwill, and some businessmen prefer congress as they don't want to see any political change since it is harmful to the profitable business.

After the fall of one-party dominance system in India, new political parties started emerging on the political front. They were relatively new in ruling as well as in fundraising activity. They started using government servants to raise political finances. Later, one more significant change observed was political parties started raising funds not from individual companies,

but from the federating units. It was time saving and efficient method to raise the political finances. As time progressed, even the MNCs started coming into the picture of political finances. They have started emerging as a primary source of funding for political parties. This is how the business class has been playing a significant role in financing political parties.

The Hegemony of Business Class:

At the time of India's independence, the Political class functioned on the values of equity, social justice, freedom and democracy, the welfare of people, and providing services to the poor, etc. The business class never used to interfere in course of action of the political class. The goal of polity was to achieve economic development by considering the equity aspect. But, post-1967, the political class started succumbing to the business class. They started considering the interests of the business class more than the welfare of people at large. The business class has emerged as a hegemon. Even the state started acting more like a corporate capitalist in nature. The introduction of the new economic policy in 1991 was an indication of the emergence of a new form of the state which was far from the welfare state and more like a corporate capitalist state.

In this way, the business class has evolved from merely playing the role of an interest group to becoming the hegemon of Indian polity.

1.2.3 Chambers of Commerce and Industry:

In the above section, we have understood that the business class favored acting as an influencer in the field of politics rather than forming a political party to govern the state. So, they started organizing themselves in the 19th century. In 1936, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce was established to organize to represent the interest of British businesses and also the interests of the provincial government. The chamber has cordial relations with the government and the government took the advice of the chamber on many key issues of public importance. The chamber was mainly concerned with economic issues and preferred to stay away from politics till the end of the 19th century.

The Bombay and Bengal chambers were used to represent British interests. Therefore, the Indian business community felt the need for representation. They organized themselves to secure their interests. Accordingly, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Indian Merchants Chamber was established in 1887 and 1907 respectively. The nationalistic sentiments inspired the working culture of the chambers of commerce. This was mainly because important nationalistic leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Dinshaw Wacha Purushottamdas Thackerdas, etc. had good relations with the trading community. The chamber fully supported the Swadeshi Movement started by the government. They sought to make people aware of the economic issues. During the Gandhian era, many members of the chamber participated in the agitations led by Gandhi.

Apart from the above-mentioned chambers there exists Marwari Chambers of Commerce, Vidarbha Chamber of Commerce, Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce, etc. Various trade associations such as the cotton mill association, Bombay and Ahmedabad Mill owners' association, etc. are functioning efficiently. The British government recognized their significance and started giving them representation. It was in 1861, the then-Bombay governor appointed a member of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce to the legislative council. Then the Indian Council Act of 1909 and 1935 sought to increase the representation of these chambers in the legislative machinery of the country.

But, post-independence, the Indian government stopped this practice of providing representation to the business community in the legislative organ. As a result, the business community lost its privilege to be a part of the legislative organ. They again started organizing themselves. Maharashtra has numerous such organizations as it is one of the highly industrialized states. Moreover, it has various industry and trade associations, export promotion councils, etc. The government always takes into consideration their views. Many of them have been appointed as a member of advisory committees such as the sales tax advisory committee, central excise advisory committee, etc. They suggest a certain change in the policies prepared by the government through continuous interaction with government agencies. The chambers resort to various strategies for influencing the government. For instance, newspaper campaigns, organizing seminars, mobilizing public opinion, etc. The important point to note is that these business organizations preferred to remain apolitical. They avoid promoting a particular candidate or a political party. But, they have a significant influence on the functioning of the government.

1.2.4 Concluding remarks:

Business and Politics have always had cordial relations with one another. Initially, the business class has acted as an interest group to serve their interest. But, as time progressed, they started interfering much in the political sphere. They tried to be with the political party and even played the role of political financiers. Ultimately, they have acquired an influential position in the state politics of Maharashtra so much so that they started acting like a hegemon. In this section, we have noted the chambers of commerce in Maharashtra, their relations with the political parties, and their involvement in state politics. This is how business and politics have a nexus between them.

Check Your Progress

1) Describe the nexus between the business class and politics.

1.3.1 What are Co-operatives?

It's a firm jointly run by its members. Members will get their share of the profit as per their capital contribution. They enjoy significant control over the business. There are many cooperative institutions in the state of Maharashtra. Sugar co-operative is the most influential among all. The members of these cooperative institutions play an influential role in the state politics of Maharashtra.

According to the report on the Congress working committee which was prepared by C. Subramanyam in 1967, congress has played dominant status in Maharashtra politics, and its credit lies in the active participation of the party in the cooperative sector. Congress has always encouraged the cooperative sector in Maharashtra. Because of political patronage, these cooperative elites have a strong hold over the Panchayati raj institutions of the state and the state machinery too. The cooperative leaders are actively participating in the state politics of Maharashtra.

1.3.2 Origins of Sugar Co-operatives in Maharashtra:

Several factors are responsible for the existence of the sugar co-operative in Maharashtra. Let's understand them:

In Maharashtra, there exists a rich peasant class. They are numerically strong as well as wield enormous political power. They usually cultivate sugarcane. The extensive canal irrigation has contributed to these farmers' large-scale cultivation of sugarcane. The financial institutions are already in place in the form of cooperative credit infrastructure to fulfill the credit requirements of these farmers. Sugarcane gets processed into sugar which has a high value in the market. As a consequence, peasants are highly attracted to take this crop. Moreover, the political patronage of the rich peasants makes them powerful. Therefore, sugarcane production is higher in the state of Maharashtra.

One thing to note here is that peasants preferred to process the sugarcane into sugar rather than into jaggery. Because the amount of sugar that gets processed from a unit volume of sugarcane is twice that of the amount of jaggery gets produced from the same amount of sugarcane. Hence, processing sugarcane into sugar is very profitable to the peasants. The rich peasants thought that the best way would be to organize themselves and form cooperative institutions. Because they were completely aware of the fact that it would be difficult for the individual peasant to raise money to process their canes. The required conditions for the establishment of a sugar cooperative were already in place. Therefore, the first sugar cooperative 'Pravaranagar Sugar Cooperative was established in 1949 at Loni in Maharashtra. It was established by Vitthalrao Vikhe-Patil under the Co-operative Society's Act of 1904.

Sugar Co-operatives and Politics in Maharashtra:

Marathas started capturing power at the local levels of government in western Maharashtra by the late 1920s. There was a clear shift in the composition of assemblies from 1936 onwards. Now, instead of the urban upper caste, the rural middle caste has started entering into the political sphere. Marathas occupied nearly 40% of the rural middle caste. This change has been reflected in the importance given to the cooperative sector. The government has provided Rs. 6 lakhs as share capital for the establishment of the first sugar cooperative in the state. The cooperative leaders raised Rs. 2 lakhs on their own and took a loan of Rs. 20 lakhs. The important point to note here is that for the loan, the state itself played the role of a guarantor of that money. It was visible that the state guaranteed around 90% of the total cost of establishing a sugar cooperative. This is how the cooperative sector has been politicized. Rajni Kothari rightly pointed out, *“There is a politicization of cooperative and institutionalization of politics in rural Maharashtra”*.

Growth of Sugar Cooperative:

It was observed that power was getting consolidated among the rural elites at the state government level after the first general election in 1951-52. The congress ministry in the state started recommending grants of industrial licenses to the central government. Interestingly, they recommended only the sugar factories set up by the peasants “cooperatively”. These rural peasantries took full advantage of the situation and established three more sugar factories in Ahmednagar. Now, more sugar factories started getting established in other parts of Maharashtra. The number of sugar cooperatives in the state increased to 52. This expansion of sugar factories in the state led to the creation of the “Sugar Lobby¹”. The sugar lobby in the state has acquired the most influential status among all other cooperatives.

For the political class, this sugar lobby acts as both a money bank as well as a vote bank. The renowned political scholar namely V.M. Sirsikar has made a comparison between the sugar lobby in the state and feudal lords of Europe. According to him, feudal lords were very influential in specific territories of Europe. Similarly, the sugar lobby has acquired control over many talukas and tehsils. It was observed that around 74% of the leaders of sugar cooperatives were elected as MLAs and MPs from 1952 to 1972. State politics is of utmost importance to these cooperative leaders as the state has the ultimate control over them. Therefore, the majority of the time cooperative leaders support the ruling party. They use interest group strategies to influence the policies of the government in their favour.

To wield control over state politics, the sugar lobby was formed in the state under the leadership of Vasantdada Patil in 1968-69. They wanted that the laws governing the cooperatives should not to be changed in such a way that it would cause loss to them. In 1974-75, V.P. Naik the then

¹ Lobby is group of people who attempts to influence the policies of the government to suit their interests.

chief minister of Maharashtra tried to end the hold of the sugar lobby in the state. Hence, the members of the lobby revolted against him and successfully removed him in 1975. Then S.B. Chavhan became the state chief minister. He was also the biggest critic of the sugar lobby. He was also removed by the lobby and this time Dada Patil, the leader of the sugar cooperative became the chief minister of Maharashtra. This was nothing but a huge success for the sugar lobby in the state.

But, the Congress party suffered a split. It resulted in a split in the sugar lobby too. Dada Patil was ousted and a non-congress government was formed. Sharad Pawar became the chief minister leading the progressive democratic front in 1978. In 1980, Sugar lobbyists realise that they need Congress to suit their interests. Therefore, the sugar lobby came back to the Congress party and again established its influence in the state.

Concluding remarks:

To conclude, Sugar cooperatives play a significant role in the state politics of Maharashtra. The vital decisions of the cooperative sector are taken by the government. Such as granting permission to establish a processing unit, finalizing the location of the sugar factory, and the like. The management of the cooperatives is regulated by the government. The government has the authority to keep a check on the management and remove its board of directors if found any inefficiency. Financial control over the cooperatives also lies in the government. Therefore, the cooperative sector is highly dependent on the political party. But, the mismanagement of such institutions and misuse of funds has led to the existential crisis of these cooperatives. Moreover, in today's globalized world, even the government thinks twice before providing patronage to such cooperative institutions. This has led to the closure of many such institutions. Now, the cooperative sector will have to resort to professional management strategies for its survival.

Check Your Progress

1) Explain the politics of Sugar Co-operatives in Maharashtra.

1.4 LAND ISSUES – URBAN AND RURAL

Introduction:

Land has a solid structure with a three-dimensional dynamic body. It supports life. Its areas are fixed. Therefore, the land gets used continuously which results in its degradation. When we talk about the land in terms of the political economy of Maharashtra, it is very scarce. Its prices have increased tremendously because of its limited supply. Maharashtra is an urbanized state. The rising level of urbanization means

there have to be provisions for housing and civic amenities in equal proportion.

There is a shortage of housing amenities in urban areas which led to the establishment of slum habitat. This increased level of urbanization has decreased the amount of land available for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the prices of agricultural land have increased. Consequently, the production of agricultural products has declined and the prices of the agricultural output have increased. In this way, land has caused multifold issues in both the urban and rural spheres of a country.

1.4.1 Land Issues – Urban and Rural:

Land degradation is the most common issue of land. Land degradation can be physical degradation or it can be chemical degradation too. It can happen at the same time also. Chemical degradation of land is generally a phenomenon related to areas where the climate is humid and it is subject to heavy rainfall. Whereas, physical degradation of land can occur in any place of humid as well as arid/semi-arid climate. Land degradation can take place both naturally as well as due to manmade reasons. But, the degradation of land due to manmade reasons is precarious. The use of pesticides is profitable for the production of a crop, but it harms the land and creates an imbalance in the environment. Also, the use of technology to increase agricultural output has caused land degradation to a greater extent. In rural areas, land degradation takes place mainly due to the extra use of fertilizers and pesticides whereas in urban areas it occurs due to a lack of proper sewerage system, household, and industrial waste, plastic, etc.

Another peculiar problem related to the land is soil degradation. This occurs simultaneously with land degradation. Soil erosion by water is one form of soil degradation. It also involves salinization lateralization and alkalization. Etc. Even natural disasters such as tsunamis, volcanoes, and floods can lead to soil degradation. It may also cause due to several man-made activities such as inadequate treatment of sewerage, industrial wastewater, etc.

Then the Land Degradation in the sugar belt of Maharashtra is a highly concerning issue. There are a lot of microorganisms present on land which is helpful for the sustainable growth of a crop. But, it has been observed that the presence of such microorganisms is decreasing because of the practice of not using chemical fertilizers properly and the wrong application of irrigation techniques to the crops such as sugarcane in Maharashtra. Therefore, Salinity is one of the main concerns in the sugar belt of Maharashtra. This has resulted in the deterioration of soil structure and its texture. Because of this issue, the productivity of the crop has also declined over the years. Earlier the land was popular for its fertility. The farmers could grow sugarcane even if the rainfall is not adequate. But, the degradation of land has multiplied the issues tremendously.

Soil Salinity is an increasing concern. It has been occurring especially in the post-green revolution phase. During this era, a lot of emphasis was put

on using chemical fertilizers for increasing crop production. But, the overdose of chemical fertilizers has caused the issue of soil salinity. This has affected the productivity of the land to a greater extent.

So, these were some of the issues related to the land in Maharashtra.

Development of Navi Mumbai:

The Bombay Metropolitan regional planning board prepared a plan to build a similar city to decongest Mumbai in January 1970. The newly planned city was known as Navi-Mumbai. The basic aim was to lessen the burden on Mumbai. Consequently, to plan and develop the city of Navi-Mumbai a 'City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra Ltd was set up in 1970. To develop this city, land near Panvel taluka constituting 30 villages was acquired by the Government. There was a lot of resistance to this as many activists opined that the compensation given by the government is not adequate. The government did not give proper rehabilitation facilities to the villagers affected by this project. Lands have also been allocated to establish higher educational institutions. The Airport Authority of India has decided to build the second international airport in Navi Mumbai. Accordingly, the land has been acquired by the government to fulfill its purpose.

Coastal Management Zone:

The Ministry of Environment and Forest released the coastal management zone notification in 2008. It replaced the coastal Zone regulations of 1991. The new draft notification has classified the coastal zone into the following four categories: a) Ecologically Sensitive Areas – such as Mangroves, Coral reefs, and sand beaches, b) Areas of Particular Concern – such as Coastal Municipalities, Coastal Panchayats, c) Open Areas, and d) Islands. This classification would be demarcated by the government by taking into consideration several factors such as sea level, geomorphology, elevation, and the like.

Special Economic Zone:

The Special Economic Zone are industrial area aimed to boost export that can be developed by any private party or government agency. The activities taking place in the coastal region led to the large-scale displacement of coastal communities. Therefore, the fishing community has protested a lot against the special economic zones as their lives got affected because of the forced land acquisition and destruction of the shoreline to conduct developmental activities. Some activists have pointed out that the democratic rights of displaced people will get violated because of the creation of special economic zones. They opined that people are getting landless due to this. But, the plan was that the villages will continue to exist within the SEZs and only agricultural land will be used for SEZs. But people were questioning this too as they will not get their right to rehabilitation. It's a fact that as the industry will grow, the demand for allied activities such as banking, insurance, hospitality, and shopping centers will also increase. Therefore, a large proportion of the land will

also be used for this purpose under SEZs. In this way, SEZs have become a much-debated issue related to the land.

1.4.3 Concluding remarks:

To conclude, Land is an important factor in the development of any region. But as time is progressing its demand is increasing rapidly but the supply is very limited. Because of this, technology has been used to make the fullest use of the available land. Again, this has created a lot of issues such as land degradation, soil degradation, land salinity, soil salinity, etc. Also, the CRZs and SEZs caused a lot of issues related to the land. Now, we need to deal with those issues scientifically and practically.

Check Your Progress

1) Evaluate the Land issues in urban and rural areas.

1.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have understood the nexus between the business class and political class, and the evolution of the business class from being a pressure group to becoming a hegemon. The growth and development of chambers of commerce. In the next section, we studied the political economy of Maharashtra with special reference to the cooperative sector, the politics of sugar cooperatives in Maharashtra, and the significance they have achieved in state politics. Lastly, we looked at the importance of the land and several issues about the land in urban and rural areas of Maharashtra.

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POLITICAL PARTIES

Unit Structure

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- 2.8 Coalition Politics
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- 2.10 Exercise

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the party politics in Maharashtra
- To learn the role of regional political party in state
- To understand the coalition form of government

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The political party system in India plays a crucial role in shaping the nation's democratic landscape. It serves as a platform for political participation, representation, and the formulation of policies. This chapter aims to provide an overview of the political parties as determinants of politics in Maharashtra, highlighting its significance, key features, and challenges. Political parties in India are vital institutions that enable citizens to participate in governance, express their views, and influence decision-making processes. They provide a platform for individuals with similar ideological, social, and economic interests to come together, formulate policies, and contest elections. Political parties serve as a link between the government and the people, ensuring representation and accountability.

The Features of the Indian Political Party System:

a) Multi-party System:

India follows a multi-party system, characterized by the presence of numerous political parties representing various regional, religious, and ideological interests. This diversity reflects the country's rich social fabric and ensures the representation of diverse viewpoints.

b) Dominance of National Parties:

While regional parties have a significant presence, national parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC) play a prominent role in Indian politics. These parties have a wider reach, span across multiple states, and often form national-level governments.

c) Coalition Politics:

Given the diversity of parties in India, coalition governments have become common at the national and state levels. Parties form alliances based on shared goals and ideologies, leading to a collaborative approach in governance.

The political parties are the essential component of nations democratic framework, providing a platform for political participation and representation. While it reflects the diversity of the nation, challenges such as regionalism, dynastic politics, and the influence of money and muscle power persist. Addressing these challenges requires efforts to strengthen internal democracy, promote transparency, and enact comprehensive campaign finance reforms. The regional and national parties play important role in the construction of grassroot democratic framework in federal structure. The political parties in Maharashtra are divided into two major aspects in political nature, one is nationalist agenda which focus on nation centric development and other is regional centric agenda like language and regional centric development.

Prominent Political Parties in Maharashtra are National Parties: Indian National Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party. Regional Parties: Nationalist Congress party, Shiv Sena and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena

2.2 INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (I)

The Indian National Congress (INC), commonly referred to as Congress (I), is one of the major political parties in India. It is a direct descendant of the original Indian National Congress that played a pivotal role in India's struggle for independence. Congress (I) traces its roots back to the Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885. After India gained independence in 1947, the original Indian National Congress transformed into a political party. In 1978, following a split within the party, Congress (I) emerged as a separate entity led by Indira Gandhi. Prime minister Indira Gandhi, became the face of Congress and served as the party's president. Under her leadership, the party witnessed significant political success, winning multiple elections and implementing key policies. Indira Gandhi's leadership was marked by a strong centralization of power and a focus on populist measures. Congress has historically been known for its inclusive and secular ideology. It emphasizes social justice, secularism, and a mixed economy. The party has been associated with the promotion of welfare programs, land reforms, and poverty alleviation measures. It has advocated for policies aimed at reducing inequality and providing equal opportunities for all.

After India's independence in 1947, the INC became the ruling party at the national level. In Maharashtra, the INC also gained prominence and formed the government in the state. After the Independence and before formation of Maharashtra state the Indian national congress was led by Morarji Desai a prominent leader of Bombay presidency. Later after reorganisation of states, Yashwantrao Chavan, a stalwart of Maharashtra politics, played a significant role in shaping the state's politics as a leader of the INC. Maharashtra has always been an important state for INC in terms of national politics. Under the leadership of INC governments, Maharashtra witnessed various social and economic reforms. The state government focused on industrialization, promoting cooperative movements, and implementing land reforms to address agrarian issues. Initiatives like the Green Revolution, the establishment of industrial estates, and the development of public institutions contributed to the state's progress. The INC in Maharashtra experienced internal power struggles and leadership changes over the years. Prominent leaders like Vasant Naik, Shankarrao Chavan, Sharad Pawar, and Vilasrao Deshmukh emerged as key figures within the party and held important positions in the state government.

In the 1990s, Maharashtra witnessed the rise of regional parties like the Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), which challenged the dominance of the INC. These regional parties gained popularity by highlighting regional and local issues, leading to a shift in the political landscape of the state. The rise of regional parties brought verity in democratic process, such that establishing one party dominance or major in state is difficult. Therefore, to stay in power INC made coalition with regional parties. Coalitions have become a common feature in Maharashtra politics, and the INC has engaged in alliances to form governments. The INC has been part of coalition governments with regional parties like the NCP, forming the Congress-NCP alliance (UPA), which has alternated in power with other alliances over the years.

The INC in Maharashtra has focused on policies and programs for social welfare, rural development, education, and healthcare. Initiatives such as the Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayee Arogya Yojana (healthcare scheme) and the Indira Awas Yojana (housing scheme) have been implemented to address the needs of marginalized communities. In recent years, the INC has faced challenges in Maharashtra politics, including electoral setbacks and intra-party disputes and corruption. The party has been working on rejuvenating its organization and reconnecting with the grassroots to regain its influence and appeal among voters. Indian National Congress and Nationalist congress party led coalition ruled in state government between 2004 to 2014, till the Rise of BJP at centre has collapse INC at any major state. The INC came into power again 2019 election with coalition of Maha Vikas Aghadi (Coalition between Shiv sena, NCP and INC) keeping INC at third position of Coalition. The MVA make congress into power but destroyed its power image in state as national political party. Structural imbalance and internal politics in party led the INC weaker party in Maharashtra politics.

The INC has the history from pre-independence in Maharashtra, the party have legacy and foundation in Maharashtra but struggling to re-establish its legitimate place in contemporary politics of Maharashtra.

2.3 BHARTIYA JANATA PARTY

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is one of the major political parties in India and has had a significant impact on Indian politics since its inception. The party's origin can be trace from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which was founded by Indian Political and Nationalist Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951. After the National Emergency of 1975-77, The Bharatiya Janata Party was formed on April 6, 1980, through the merger of Jana Sangh in the several political parties, Socialist party, Congress (O) and Bharatiya Lok Dal. At its formation, the party was ideologically rooted in Hindutva, a nationalist and culturally Hindu ideology. In the 1984 general elections, the BJP won only two seats in the Indian Parliament. However, the party gained prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with its Ram Janmabhoomi movement, which sought to build a temple dedicated to Lord Ram at the site of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The movement brought the BJP into the national spotlight and helped it mobilize support among voters.

In the 1990s, the BJP emerged as a strong political force and gained electoral success in various states, including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. In 1998, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition came to power at the national level, with Atal Bihari Vajpayee becoming the Prime Minister. The NDA government completed a full term in office and was re-elected in 1999. In the early 2000s, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, who served as the Chief Minister of Gujarat from 2001 to 2014, the BJP focused on its development agenda and governance record. In 2014, the BJP won a resounding victory in the general elections, securing a majority on its own and Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India. Re-election and Dominance: In 2019, the BJP won a second consecutive majority in the general elections, further solidifying its position as a dominant political force in India. Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, the party has implemented various economic and social reforms, such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), demonetization of currency to curb corruption and illegal hoarding of money, Jan Dhan Yojana, Digital India etc.

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has played a significant role in Maharashtra politics, both as a dominant force and as a key coalition partner. Throughout its history, the BJP has emphasized nationalism, Hindutva, and socio-economic development as its core ideologies. The party has expanded its base and membership across India and has been successful in establishing a strong presence at both the national and state levels. BJP establish itself in mainstream of state politics in coalition with shiv sena led by Balasaheb Thackeray in 1988. The BJP-Shiv Sena Alliance together contest election in 1989 of lok sabha as well as state constituent assembly. The alliance formed a government in Maharashtra between 1995 and 1999. The Alliance was in opposition from 1999 to

2014. The Shiv sena called off the alliance before the election of 2014 with BJP and contest election. But witnessing the rise of BJP in state as largest party the two had allied again between 2014 to 2019, until the Shiv sena broke the alliance again and formed the new coalition with NCP and INC as Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in 2019 putting BJP into opposition.

BJP has witnessed considerable electoral success in Maharashtra. The party has consistently increased its presence and vote share in the state over the years. It has emerged as a major political force, challenging the dominance of traditional parties like the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). The BJP has held the position of Chief Minister in Maharashtra. Notably when, Devendra Fadnavis became the first BJP Chief Minister of Maharashtra in 2014 after the party won a majority in the state assembly elections. Fadnavis' tenure focused on infrastructure development, attracting investments, and implementing welfare programs.

The BJP has implemented various policy initiatives in Maharashtra, focusing on key areas such as infrastructure development, urban governance, agriculture, and social welfare. The party has emphasized the importance of industrial growth, attracted investments, and promoted the 'Make in Maharashtra' campaign to boost manufacturing and job creation. Moreover, the BJP-led government in Maharashtra has initiated several welfare schemes, including affordable housing programs, farmer support measures, and initiatives for women's empowerment and social justice. The BJP has worked on expanding its organizational reach in Maharashtra, strengthening its grassroots presence, and increasing its membership base. The party has been proactive in conducting party programs, rallies, and outreach campaigns to connect with voters and mobilize support.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged as a major political force in Maharashtra, with notable electoral success, Chief Ministership, and policy initiatives. The party's role in Maharashtra politics has been shaped by successful alliances, policy focus on development and welfare, and efforts to expand its organizational base in the state. Recently Bharatiya Janata Party formed its government with the help of Shinde group (rebels from Shiv sena party under the leadership of Eknath Shinde) bring BJP into power with Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena) as Chief minister and Devendra Fadnavis (BJP) as Dy Chief minister in August 2022.

2.4 NATIONALIST CONGRESS PARTY

The National Congress Party (NCP) is a political party in India that was formed in 1999 through a split from the Indian National Congress (INC). Led by Sharad Pawar, the NCP has had a distinct political journey and has emerged as a significant player in Indian politics. The NCP's political journey can be traced back to the late 1990s when differences within the INC led to a split. Sharad Pawar, along with a group of senior leaders, formed the NCP, primarily due to disagreements over Sonia Gandhi's leadership and her foreign origin, which raised questions about her

eligibility to become the Prime Minister of India. In its initial years, the NCP positioned itself as a regional party with a strong base in the state of Maharashtra, where Sharad Pawar has had a long and influential political career. The party focused on issues related to agriculture, rural development, and regional concerns. It forged alliances with other regional parties to strengthen its electoral prospects. In the 2004 general elections, the NCP formed an alliance with the INC and other parties, collectively known as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). This alliance emerged as the majority coalition and formed the government at the centre, with Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister and Sharad Pawar serving as the Minister of Agriculture. Pawar's tenure as Agriculture Minister was marked by initiatives aimed at rural development, agricultural reforms, and improving farmers' welfare.

The NCP continued to be a part of the UPA government during its second term from 2009 to 2014. However, during this period, the party faced criticism for corruption allegations and policy controversies. Several NCP leaders, including Sharad Pawar, were implicated in corruption scandals, tarnishing the party's image. In subsequent years, the NCP faced mixed electoral fortunes. It maintained its presence in Maharashtra and formed alliances with other regional parties in the state. The party also expanded its footprint in other states like Kerala, Goa, and Meghalaya, where it won a few seats in state elections. However, at the national level, the NCP struggled to make significant inroads outside of Maharashtra.

In recent years, the NCP has been part of various political formations and alliances. It has been involved in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition in Maharashtra, along with the Shiv Sena and the INC, which formed the government in the state after the 2019 assembly elections. The NCP has also sought to strengthen its position by actively engaging with other regional parties and like-minded political forces.

The NCP's political ideology can be described as centrist with a regional focus. It has emphasized issues such as farmers' welfare, rural development, and social justice. While maintaining its regional identity, the NCP has occasionally aligned with national-level parties to strengthen its position and influence at the centre.

In conclusion, the National Congress Party (NCP) has had a distinct political journey since its formation in 1999. From its origins as a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress (INC), the NCP has evolved into a regional party with a strong base in Maharashtra. It has been part of various political alliances and coalitions at the national and state levels, and while it has faced challenges and controversies, the NCP continues to be an influential player in Indian politics, particularly in Maharashtra.

2.5 REPUBLICAN PARTY OF INDIA

The Republican Party of India (RPI) is a significant political party in India that emerged in the 1950s with the aim of championing the rights of

marginalized and oppressed communities. Led by social reformers and visionary leaders, the RPI has played a crucial role in advocating for social justice, empowerment, and inclusivity within the country's political landscape. The Republican Party of India was founded in 1957 by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, an eminent jurist, social reformer, and the chief architect of India's Constitution. Inspired by Ambedkar's vision, the party aimed to eradicate caste-based discrimination and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all citizens. The RPI strongly believes in social justice, secularism, and the empowerment of marginalized communities, particularly Scheduled Castes (Dalits), Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and religious minorities. Over the years, the Republican Party of India has been led by prominent leaders who have fervently fought for the rights and welfare of oppressed communities. Apart from Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, leaders like Ramdas Athawale, Prakash Ambedkar, and Jogendra Kawade have made significant contributions to the party's growth and impact.

Ramdas Athawale, the current president of the RPI, has been an influential voice in advocating for social justice and uplifting the marginalized. Through his political activism and participation in the Indian Parliament, Athawale has been instrumental in implementing policies and welfare programs that directly benefit the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of society. Prakash Ambedkar, the grandson of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, has continued his grandfather's legacy by leading the RPI and furthering the party's objectives. He has been actively involved in challenging social inequalities, promoting education, and addressing the socio-economic issues faced by marginalized communities. Jogendra Kawade, a renowned Dalit leader and former president of the RPI, has dedicated his political career to the upliftment of Dalits and other oppressed sections. He has been vocal in demanding reservations, land reforms, and the eradication of caste-based discrimination.

In Maharashtra, the RPI has played a crucial role in championing the rights and welfare of marginalized communities. The party has been instrumental in raising social issues, advocating for equality, and challenging caste-based discrimination. The RPI has been successful in mobilizing support from Dalit communities in Maharashtra, particularly through its alliance with other political parties. Over the years, the party has formed alliances with various political groups, including the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena.

In recent years, the RPI has gained prominence through its involvement in coalition politics. It has been part of the ruling alliances in Maharashtra, contributing to the formation of government and policy-making. The party's presence has given a voice to the concerns and aspirations of marginalized communities in the state. Moreover, the RPI has actively contested elections in Maharashtra, both at the state and national levels. While its electoral success has been varied, the party has managed to secure seats in the state legislature and has had members representing the party in the Parliament.

2.6 PEASANTS AND WORKERS PARTY OR (SHETKARI KAMGAR PAKSHA)

In Maharashtra politics, The Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWPI) also known as Shetkari kamgar paksha is a left-wing political party that primarily represents the interests of peasants, workers, and the rural poor. The Shetkari Kaamgar Paksha (SKP) is a political party in Maharashtra that primarily represents the interests of farmers and agricultural workers. Founded by Khairnar Anna Dattu in 1996, the party has played a notable role in Maharashtra politics, particularly in advocating for agricultural issues and the welfare of farmers. While the party has a presence in Maharashtra, it is not as significant as some other political parties in the state, the party has historically focused on addressing agrarian issues, workers' rights, and social justice. The party has been vocal about the concerns of farmers, highlighting the need for land reforms, fair pricing for agricultural produce, and access to basic amenities in rural areas. Although the party has contested elections in Maharashtra, its electoral success has been limited. The party has struggled to secure significant representation in the state legislature or win a substantial number of seats in parliamentary elections. However, despite its limited electoral success, the party has maintained a presence in Maharashtra's grassroot political discourse by raising critical issues and advocating for the rights of peasants and workers. The party has often aligned with other left-wing and socialist parties to amplify its voice and influence public policies.

One of the notable achievements of the Shetkari Kaamgar Paksha SKP was its involvement in the massive farmers' movement in Maharashtra, especially the Long March of Farmers in 2018. The party played a significant role in mobilizing farmers and highlighting their demands for better agricultural policies, loan waivers, and drought relief measures. In terms of electoral participation, the SKP has contested elections in Maharashtra, primarily focusing on constituencies with a significant agricultural population. While its electoral success has been limited, the party has managed to win a few seats in the state legislature, giving a voice to the concerns of farmers within the political arena. the SKP has also engaged in coalition politics by forming alliances with other political parties. By joining hands with larger political entities, the party has sought to amplify its influence and advocate for the interests of farmers at both the state and national levels.

2.7 SHIV SENA (SS) AND MAHARASHTRA NAVNIRMAN SENA (MNS)

Shiv Sena:

The Shiv Sena is a prominent political party in Maharashtra, known for its strong regional identity and advocacy for the rights and interests of the Marathi-speaking people. Its origin and subsequent role in Maharashtra politics have significantly influenced the state's political landscape. The Shiv Sena was founded on June 19, 1966, by Bal Thackeray, a charismatic

leader who sought to address the concerns of the Marathi-speaking population in Maharashtra. The party's formation was driven by the perception that the interests of Marathi-speaking people were being neglected, leading to socio-economic disparities and a loss of cultural identity. Initially, the Shiv Sena focused on issues related to job opportunities for Marathi-speaking youth and the protection of Marathi language and culture. The party drew support from various sections of society, including the working class, middle class, and local businesses. Over time, the Shiv Sena expanded its political agenda and took a more assertive stance. It started advocating for a regional identity, demanding preferential treatment for Maharashtrians in employment and education. The party also adopted a pro-Hindutva stance, aligning itself with Hindu nationalist ideologies. The party's ability to form alliances and mobilize support has enabled it to play a significant role in shaping Maharashtra's political landscape. Shiv Sena expanded its influence and emerged as a significant political force in Maharashtra. It won the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections in 1985 and started gaining popularity among various sections of society. In 1995, Shiv Sena formed an alliance with the BJP, called the "Shiv Sena-BJP alliance." This alliance provided political stability and helped both parties gain power in Maharashtra. Shiv Sena held the Chief Minister's position multiple times in coalition governments with the BJP.

The Shiv Sena's role in Maharashtra politics has been characterized by its ability to mobilize support and form alliances. It has been part of both ruling and opposition coalitions, forming alliances with Bharatiya Janata Party to gain political power and influence policies. The party had a long-standing alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and played a crucial role in the BJP's rise to power in Maharashtra. Throughout its history, the Shiv Sena has been known for its assertive and sometimes controversial methods of protest, including street agitations and strikes. However, the party has also been involved in grassroots initiatives and social work, such as providing assistance to the poor and supporting local causes.

However, in 2019, the Shiv Sena parted ways with the BJP and formed a coalition government with the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) as Maha Vikas aghadi (MVA) marking a significant shift in the state's political dynamics. Uddhav Thackeray, became the Chief Minister of the new coalition government of Maharashtra in November 2019. Shiv Sena's current political stand leans towards regionalism, secularism, and a focus on Maharashtra's development. Unfortunately, in June 2022, section of shiv sena party rebel under the leadership of Eknath Shinde and separated from Uddav Thackeray's party, to form a new government in coalition with Bharatiya Janata party. The Shinde group has also claimed and achieved the legal rights of original Shiv sena its name and symbol through the right process of law and justice.

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena:

The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) is a political party founded by Raj Thackeray, the nephew of Bal Thackeray, who was the founder of Shiv Sena. The party was established on March 9, 2006, with the aim of advocating for the rights and welfare of the Marathi-speaking population in Maharashtra. The MNS emerged as a breakaway faction of Shiv Sena, representing a more aggressive and assertive approach to Marathi regionalism.

The MNS played a significant role in the political landscape of Maharashtra, particularly in the mid-2000s. The MNS was formed as a result of Raj Thackeray's dissatisfaction with the leadership of Shiv Sena, led by his cousin Uddhav Thackeray. Raj Thackeray sought to create a platform that focused on championing Marathi interests more aggressively. The party's ideology revolves around Marathi regionalism, including issues related to employment opportunities, language, and cultural preservation. The MNS adopted a populist agenda, targeting issues that resonated with the Marathi-speaking population. It vehemently advocated for the rights of Marathi-speaking people, raising concerns about job opportunities for locals and the alleged neglect of Marathi culture. The MNS made a significant impact on Maharashtra politics, particularly during the 2009 state assembly elections. It managed to secure a substantial number of seats in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, emerging as the main opposition party to the ruling coalition at that time. The party's strong performance showcased its ability to mobilize voters on the basis of regional identity.

The MNS, through its aggressive rhetoric and street-level activism, often dominated the public discourse in Maharashtra. Its actions, such as protests against non-Marathi individuals in certain industries and its stance on issues related to infrastructure development, attracted considerable media attention and public scrutiny. While the MNS initially showed promise, its influence gradually waned in subsequent elections. The party faced challenges in expanding its base beyond Marathi-speaking regions and struggled to maintain its early momentum. It faced electoral setbacks in subsequent state assembly and parliamentary elections. Over time, the MNS has undergone shifts in its political strategy. It has attempted to broaden its appeal by addressing broader issues beyond Marathi regionalism, including corruption and governance. However, it has struggled to regain its earlier political prominence.

The Maharashtra Navnirman Sena emerged as a breakaway faction of Shiv Sena, with a more aggressive approach to Marathi regionalism. It made a notable impact on Maharashtra politics in the late 2000s but faced challenges in sustaining its initial momentum. Despite its diminished influence in recent years, the MNS remains a key player in the political landscape of Maharashtra, particularly on issues related to Marathi identity and regional interests.

Coalitions play a crucial role in Maharashtra politics due to the state's diverse political landscape and the need for alliances to form a stable government. A coalition is formed when two or more political parties come together to collectively govern and share power. In Maharashtra, coalition politics has been prevalent for several decades. The state has seen various political parties forming alliances to secure a majority in the state legislature and effectively govern the state. Coalitions in Maharashtra politics often involve regional parties, national parties, and sometimes smaller parties representing specific interests or communities. These coalitions are typically formed before or after elections, based on common ideologies, policy objectives, or the need for numerical strength.

The alliances formed in Maharashtra politics have played a significant role in shaping the state's governance and policy-making. They have allowed parties with diverse ideologies and support bases to come together and provide a more balanced representation of the electorate's interests. Coalitions in Maharashtra have been instrumental in addressing regional issues, ensuring the representation of various communities, and accommodating diverse political ideologies. They have helped in the formulation and implementation of policies related to agriculture, infrastructure, social welfare, and development. Further, coalitions have often been formed to counter the dominance of a single party or to prevent the fragmentation of votes among multiple parties. These alliances aim to provide a united front against a common political opponent and maximize the chances of forming a government. The coalitions in Maharashtra politics are not without challenges. Managing the diverse interests and ideologies of coalition partners can be complex and can lead to conflicts and disagreements. Balancing power-sharing arrangements, distribution of ministerial positions, and policy decisions can sometimes strain the stability of the coalition.

In recent years, Maharashtra witnessed a significant political realignment when the long-standing alliance between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena came to an end. This led to the formation of a new coalition government comprising the Shiv Sena, Indian National Congress (INC), and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) as Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) reflecting the ever-evolving nature of coalition politics in the state. In response, the BJP reclaim the government with the help of its original ally Shiv Sena led by Shinde Faction (rebel group from Shiv Sena), The Shiv Sena led by Eknath Shinde claimed the party as original Shiv Sena as major part and support of organisation belong to them.

In conclusion, coalition politics in Maharashtra has been a crucial aspect of governance and political dynamics. It has allowed diverse parties to come together, address regional issues, and form stable governments. The coalition era also brings to the end of one-party dominance in Maharashtra politics. The largest party of the decade BJP has to be relied on coalition partner to stay in the government.

2.9 SUMMARY

The Indian National Congress (INC), commonly referred to as Congress (I), is one of the major political parties in India. It is a direct descendant of the original Indian National Congress that played a pivotal role in India's struggle for independence. The INC has the history from pre-independence in Maharashtra, the party has legacy and foundation in Maharashtra but struggling to re-establish its legitimate place in contemporary politics of Maharashtra.

The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) has played a significant role in Maharashtra politics, both as a dominant force and as a key coalition partner. Throughout its history, the BJP has emphasized nationalism, Hindutva, and socio-economic development as its core ideologies.

The National Congress Party (NCP) has had a distinct political journey since its formation in 1999. From its origins as a breakaway faction of the Indian National Congress (INC), the NCP has evolved into a regional party with a strong base in Maharashtra. It has been part of various political alliances and coalitions at the national and state levels, and while it has faced challenges and controversies, the NCP continues to be an influential player in Indian politics, particularly in Maharashtra.

The Republican party of India (RPI) has played a crucial role in Maharashtra in championing the rights and welfare of marginalized communities. The party has been instrumental in raising social issues, advocating for equality, and challenging caste-based discrimination.

In Maharashtra politics, The Peasants and Workers Party of India (PWPI) also known as Shetkari kamgar paksha is a left-wing political party that primarily represents the interests of peasants, workers, and the rural poor. The Shetkari Kaamgar Paksha (SKP) is a political party in Maharashtra that primarily represents the interests of farmers and agricultural workers.

Coalition politics in Maharashtra has been a crucial aspect of governance and political dynamics. It has allowed diverse parties to come together, address regional issues, and form stable governments. The coalition era also brings to the end of one-party dominance in Maharashtra politics. The largest party of the decade BJP has to be relied on coalition partner to stay in the government.

2.10 EXERCISE

1. Discuss the role of regional party in state politics.
2. What are the important features of Political journey of Shiv sena in Maharashtra politics.
3. Discuss about one party dominance to coalition politics in the state of Maharashtra.

4. Write a note on:
 - a) Maharashtra Navnirman Sena
 - b) Republican Party of India
 - c) Peasants and workers' party
5. Explain the importance of coalition politics.

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND MOVEMENTS

Unit Structure

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- 3.1 Tribals in Maharashtra
 - 3.1.1 Introduction
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3.1 TRIBALS IN MAHARASHTRA

3.1.1 Introduction:

Ethnically diverse groups are found all throughout the state of Maharashtra. The religious variety of Maharashtra is representative of the nation as a whole. The Maharashtra tribal movement is seen as an effort to uphold the rights and dignity of the tribal groups, who were oppressed and mugged of their traditional legacy.

In India, the tribal people are known as the native residents. They are the most vulnerable group in our society, maintaining their traditional values, practices, and beliefs while living in an unpolluted, natural environment, remote from civilization. To define a tribe has been a topic of intense and ongoing discussion among social scientists. According to Article 342 of the Indian Constitution, "Any tribe or tribal community, or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, are Scheduled Tribes." Thus, Scheduled Tribes are defined as the communities that are included in the President of India's Scheduled List. Because of this, tribes in Indian culture are often referred to as Adivasi (original settlers), Girijan (hill

dwellers), Vanya jati (forest caste men), Adimjati (Primitive castes), and Anusuchit Janjati (Scheduled tribes). Tribal settlements may be found in plains, woods, hills, and inaccessible locations with a variety of ecological and geoclimatic circumstances. The social, economic, and educational development of tribal tribes varies.

There are 1, 05, 10,213 Scheduled Tribe members documented, with 53, 15,025 males and 51, 95,188 females, representing an increase of 19, 32,937 between 2001 and 2011. In Maharashtra, the ST population grew by 22.5 percent between 2001 and 2011, and their share of the overall population increased to 9.4 percent from 8.9 percent in 2001. According to Census 2011, there are 69.3 percent more members of the Scheduled Tribe in Nandurbar than in Gadchiroli, 38.7 percent, Dhule, and Nashik combined. Male population increase in the scheduled tribe is 22.2 percent, compared to female population growth of 22.8 percent.¹

In Maharashtra, tribes are concentrated in only three of the state's historic regions: the Sahyadri, Satpuda, and Gondwana. The Varlis, Kokanas, Thakurs, Mahadeo Kolis, Malhar Kolis, Dhor Kolis, Katkaris, and other tribal tribes may be found in the Sahyadri area, which is made up of the districts of Thane, Raigad, Nashik, and Pune. The primary tribal tribes in the Satpudas area include the Korkus, which are concentrated in the districts of Bhils, Kokanas, Dublas, and Dhankas in Nandurbar, Dhule, Jalgaon, Aurangabad, and Amravati. The primary tribal tribes present in the Gondwana area include the Gonds, Madia Gonds, Korkus, Kolams, Paradhans, and Andhs, among others. This region contains districts like Chandrapur, Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Yavatmal, and Nagpur.

There were also many issues faced by tribal. Not only was there a question of possession of lands, but poverty, malnutrition, ignorance, ill health, unemployment, drug addiction, superstition, exploitation, oppression of women was making their life difficult. The history of tribal movements takes us back to the fourteenth century. From time to time tribals united against Muhammad Tughluq, King of Bidar, Bahmani Sardars and defended the lands and forts under their control.

3.1.2 Tribal Issues:

The following issues are just a few that India's indigenous people must deal with:

The Geographic Separation Issue:

The Indian tribals are somewhat physically isolated from the rest of the population. Some of them reside in physically inaccessible regions like deep valleys, thick woods, hills, mountains, etc. They struggle to build relationships with others, which keeps them socially aloof from the

¹ A Study on Good Practices in Tribal Development (Livelihood Sector) in Three Indian States. <https://tribal.nic.in/repository/ViewDoc.aspx?RepositoryNo=TRI28-08-2017110408&file=Docs/TRI28-08-2017110408.pdf>

developed world. Such physical and social confinement has a negative impact on a number of other issues.

Cultural Issues:

The tribal way of life differs greatly from that of civilised people. The tribal people are unable to comprehend the civilized people, their traditions and practices, attitudes and beliefs, and so on. They have misgivings about the developed world. They are tenaciously holding on to their traditions and practices. Various foreign Christian missionaries tried to spread their faith in various tribal regions when Britain was in power, especially in the North-Eastern provinces. Even so, they made an effort to force their culture on them. Such an endeavor is still being made now. On the other side, organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Ramakrishna Mission, and R.S.S. are promoting Hinduism in these places. The tribal religion is now being spread by a few tribal leaders. They are so confused now as a result of all these varied propagandas.

Social Issues:

The indigenous peoples are likewise plagued by social issues. They are conventional and individually bound. They are now the victims of unhealthy habits, outdated and pointless practices, and superstitious beliefs. There are still dangerous practices like child marriage, infanticide, murder, animal sacrifice, exchanging women, black magic, and others among them. They think that ghosts and spirits exist. They are fiercely committed to preserving both their unique tribal identity and all of these customs in general. As a result, it is claimed that "tribals are tribesmen first, tribesmen last, and tribes all the time."

Economic Issues:

The tribal economy is built on the most primitive kind of agriculture, making the tribal people the economically impoverished people in India. The majority of them live below the poverty line.

Following is a description of the indigenous people's primary economic issues:

As a result of the British policy, which privileged zamindars, landlords, moneylenders, forest contractors, and excise, revenue, and police officers, the tribal people had been subjected to cruel exploitation in many ways.

- a. **Exploitation:** Outsiders take advantage of the indigenous people's vulnerability, ignorance, and naivety.
- b. **Unprofitable Agriculture:** A relatively small portion of the population works in the secondary and tertiary sectors, while 90% of the tribal population is involved in agriculture. The tribals have unprofitable holdings, which causes their crop production to be extremely low.

- c. **The tribals** demand that "Agricultural Indebtness Relief Acts" be put into effect because they rely heavily on money lenders due to the lack of banking facilities in tribal areas, which makes it possible for them to enact legislation to recover their mortgaged land.

V. Issues with Education:

The indigenous people have a serious issue with illiteracy. Over 80% of them lack basic literacy skills. They now have a higher literacy rate than they had in 1931 (0.7% vs. 11.30% vs. 16.35%). This demonstrates that a majority of the indigenous people are illiterate. They don't have any confidence in established educational institutions. Many of them have no knowledge of education, institutions of higher learning, degrees, etc. They have no motivation to educate their kids. Since the majority of indigenous people are underprivileged, education seems to be a luxury for them. When someone works in agricultural, their minor children work in agriculture as well. The parents who lack literacy do not see it as their top priority to provide for their children's education.

VII. Problem with Health and Sanitation:

Tribal people are illiterate and ignorant, making it difficult for them to understand the contemporary concepts of health and sanitation. They don't give much thought to their personal well-being. They think that evil spirits and ghosts are to blame for illnesses. They use conventional treatments that are unique to them. Many of them become victims of illnesses including skin conditions, jungle fever, typhoid, tuberculosis, leprosy, malaria, venereal disorders, small pox, etc.

VIII. Separatism issue:

The British "divide and rule" strategy inflicted a lot of harm to India's tribal population. The tribal people had lost access to their traditional ways of engaging with others because the British had imposed their own administrative structure in tribal territories. The "Criminal Tribes Act" that the British had implemented gave the impression that the tribal people were either "criminals" or "anti-social beings," and the tribal people who fought against the British were called "dacoits" and "robbers." These actions, which continued for more than 200 years, alienated many of the tribal people and sparked separatist tendencies in them.

3.1.3 Steps to Improve the Situation of Scheduled Tribes:

Prior to independence, the British Government only discussed the issues of tribal development and did little to address them; instead, they used their "policy of indirect rule" to keep the tribals away from contact with civilized people. Since independence, India has paid attention to the problems of the scheduled tribes and has made efforts to address those problems effectively.

I. Community Level Welfare Programmes:

The tribals make up a sizable share of Indian nationals and hence 8.8% of the country's overall population. The indigenous people are also taking action in this area, although other nonprofit groups also believe that their wellbeing is crucial. The Indian Red Cross Society, the National Memorial Trust, and Vishwa Hindu organisations like the Bhartiya A dim Jati Sevak Sangh, the Bhil Seva Mission, the Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, among others, have all taken on this task. Other state governments have also supported Mandal, the Kasturba Gandhi Parishad, and Ramakrishna among the tribal people.

II. Government's initiatives for tribal welfare.

1) Constitutional Protections:

To protect the interests of the tribal people, certain provisions in the Indian Constitution have been created.

- i) Without exception, all Indian citizens—including indigenous people—are given equal rights and opportunities under Article 15 of the Constitution.
- ii) Under Articles 16(4), 320(4), and 335, reservations are established for tribal members in the job sector.
- iii) According to Articles 330, 332, and 334, seats in the legislatures (the Lok Sabha and State Vidhana Sabha's) have been set aside for them.
- iv) According to Article 19(5), tribe members are allowed to own property and use it anywhere in the nation.
- v) The "Consolidated Fund of India" may be drained of a sizable sum of money in accordance with Article 275 in order to fund tribal welfare initiatives.
- vi) Article 338 grants the Indian President the authority to designate a Commissioner to oversee tribal welfare initiatives.
- vii) In accordance with Article 339(2), the Central Government may instruct the States in the creation and implementation of plans, initiatives, and programmes for tribal welfare.
- viii) In accordance with Article 275(I), the Centre must provide grants-in-aid to the States for tribal welfare programmes that have been authorized.
- ix) Article 164 gives state governments the authority to establish a separate minister to oversee tribal welfare.
- x) The provisions in Article 46 safeguard the tribals' economic and educational interests.

- xi) Article 224 directs the government to use extra caution in "Scheduled Tracts" or "areas" to safeguard tribal interests.
- xii) Article 342 allows the President of India the authority to designate certain groups or communities as "scheduled tribes" upon the governor's suggestion. It also provides information on the criteria used to propose new entities as "scheduled tribes" that are eligible for "all the constitutional benefits."

2) Economic Facilities and Programmes:

The vast majority of tribal people are severely impoverished and uneducated. Numerous economic initiatives have been made to strengthen their financial condition.

- i) **Development via spending:** 172 crores and 257 crores, correspondingly, on tribal welfare initiatives throughout the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth five-year plans.
- ii) **The creation of credit:** which are founded in tribal regions to provide productive and unproductive loans, sell excess, and help the tribal people buy basic commodities. These organisations provide modern farming equipment, chemicals and fertilizers, insecticides, and better seeds to the indigenous people. These organisations work to protect the indigenous people from being taken advantage of by middlemen, contractors, and moneylenders.
- iii) **The 20-point plan concentrated** on the growth of the scheduled tribes, helping the tribal families financially so they might rise beyond the poverty line.
- iv) **Promotion of Crafts and Home Industries:** Promotion of existing Crafts and Home Industries among the Tribes, as well as promotion of similar new endeavors.
- v) **Making Agriculture Stable:** By making agriculture their line of work, the tribals are convinced to abandon their practice of "shifting cultivation" and to settle down permanently in a location of their choosing.

3) Educational Resources:

Measures to provide educational facilities that the Government has taken.

- i. Some tribal communities have school buildings. About 4000 schools were established in the tribal regions under the first Five-Year Plan itself, and all levels of education up to and including the tenth were rendered free for them.
- ii. The students under S.T. are receiving a number of benefits, including free tuition, stipends, scholarships, and the free provision of textbooks, stationery, and other supplies. In certain locations, lunch is also provided. Zero-cost boarding and lodging.

- iii. They have access to amenities, including the S.T. and S.C. "Twenty percent of the seats are earmarked for technical education, and there are age and qualifying-marks relaxations

4) Medical Facilities:

To battle illnesses like malaria, leprosy, jungle fever, monkey fever, typhoid, small pox, skin ailments, etc., several preventative and therapeutic treatments are used. In tribal communities, medical camps are held to let the locals understand how important access to modern healthcare is.

3.1.4 Conclusion:

The Sixth Plan document expresses concern that "three decades of development have not had the desired impact on the socially, economically, and educationally handicapped sections," despite the fact that the Central and State Governments have shown a great deal of interest in tribal welfare programmes, projects, and schemes.

The welfare schemes have not been successful because of weaknesses in the administrative apparatus, a lack of sensitive, trained management, a general lack of readiness for major investments, a lack of procedural accuracy in the accounting system, and a lack of adequate monitoring and assessment. Even when the seventh plan was completed, nothing drastically changed. The general betterment of the tribal peoples must get the attention it deserves in the present plan and in the years to come.

3.1.5 Questions:

- i. Comment on Tribals in Maharashtra.
- ii. What are the issues and challenges faced by Tribals in Maharashtra
- iii. Education and health challenges faces by Tribals.
- iv. Describe the Steps to Improve the Situation of Scheduled Tribes
- v. Government's initiatives for tribal welfare.

3.2 FARMERS MOVEMENTS

3.2.1 Nature of the Farmers Movements:

The agriculture sector dominates the Indian economy. The majority of people work mostly in agriculture. India was a developing nation with rudimentary agriculture prior to its independence. In addition, there was an uneven distribution of the lands and feudal lords held total control over them. The government's agricultural policy developed a two-pronged approach after independence. In order to enhance productivity and modernize agriculture, it was necessary to implement a uniform ownership structure as well.

New agricultural practices were widely adopted under the Green Revolution banner at the beginning of the 1960s with the goal of boosting productivity. The goals of the programmes were to provide landowners financial assistance and, in exchange, improve their productivity by guaranteeing access to all irrigational infrastructure. However, only wealthy and middle-class farmers were able to get loans, make fertilizer purchases, and buy high-yield variety seeds. The situation of small and marginal farmers severely deteriorated as a result of the agriculture policies' lack of consideration for the redistribution of agricultural products. Furthermore, persistent exploitation and tyranny by the wealthy farmers spread like wildfire.

Peasant movements are those that are carried out by peasants for agricultural purposes. In peasant movements, the ideology of class struggle also has a significant impact. Lenin, Fanon, and Mao all saw the peasants as the heart of the revolution, in contrast to Karl Marx who saw them as inert (Rao, 2000. xviii). In his argument, Dipankar Gupta contrasts the two types of agricultural movements in independent India.

First, the peasants' movement, which refers to those agrarian movements carried out by impoverished agricultural workers and small-scale farmers.

Second, the so-called "farmers' movement" refers to agricultural movements carried out by landowners.

The primary distinction between these two types of parties is that the former represents the interests of the impoverished peasants, while the latter represents those of the landowners (Gupta, 2002.192–195).

Governmental efforts to address the agricultural issue have been generally failed. The community projects and land reforms intended to strengthen India's capitalist foundation have only served to exacerbate the agricultural crisis.

In addition to failing to provide assistance to the great majority of deficit farmers and the agricultural proletariat, the Congress government's agrarian policies have made their plight worse. The many Government Evaluation Reports and non-official inquiries on the effects of welfare policies on rural society have fully shown this. As a result, even after independence, India's agricultural community remains rife with dissatisfaction. Numerous peasant conflicts have resulted as a result in various parts of the Maharashtra.

3.2.2 Farmers Movement in Maharashtra:

i. The Shetkar Sanga Thana:

Founded in late 1970's by Sharad Joshi. The main objective of the Sanga Thana was to reconstitute the village community. Economically, by retaining within it the surplus; socially, by providing an employment generating self-sufficient village community based on artisan production; and Politically, by devolving power from the state to the traditional

Panchayats. Main Focus on the issue of remunerative prices to farmers. Prices of onion were increased by 25-30%. Advance for purchase of sugarcane was also increased. Farmers relieved of debts; prices close to those demanded. Achievements: Remunerative prices. Succeeded in getting concessions from the electricity department. A very strong awareness can be seen amongst farmers regarding the prices of their agricultural produce. Benefits, Grant of easier loans at low rates of interest, abolition of taxes on agricultural implements, etc.

ii) The Shahada Peasants' Movement:

The Shahada Peasants' Movement derives its name from the taluka Shahada, in the Dhulia district of north-west Maharashtra, and began in January 1972. Its aim has been to mobilize poor peasants and landless laborers, generating much criticism and retaliation from landlords, moneylenders, administration and police.

iii) The Kisan Long March:

led by All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) in Maharashtra captured the nation's attention to the agrarian crisis in rural Maharashtra and forced the government to agree most of the demands raised by them. Political parties across the ideological spectrum supported the farmers demand ranging from All India Kisan Sabha of CPI (M), which had conducted the march, Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Aam Aadmi Party, Republican Party, Samajwadi Party, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) and even the Shiv Sena. Among their demands were the cancellation of farm loans, fair compensation, implementation of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations, and strict enforcement of the Forest Rights Act (FRA). the expansion of numerous pension plans for underprivileged farmers and agricultural employees, compensation for losses suffered by farmers as a result of destructive insect infestations (like the pink bollworm on cotton) and resistance to the purchase of peasant property for ostentatious and elite schemes, such the Their demands ranged from the cancellation of farm loans to the execution of the Swaminathan Commission's recommendations to the strict enforcement of the Forest Rights Act (FRA).

iv. Recent Farmers Movements:

Maharashtra farmers' foot march:

At present, the fall in onion prices has become a big problem for the farmers as they are unable to secure even the minimum price for their crop. Recently, several videos had surfaced on social media where farmers were seen throwing onions on the roads or plowing them in the field. The protesters are also demanding the implementation of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for state government employees who joined service after 2005. Ports and Mines Minister Dada Buse said the government will hold a meeting with farmers' representatives and is expected to reach a consensus on the issues raised by farmers and tribals.

To bring the government's attention to their multiple requests, including the reduction in prices of onions, soyabeans, cotton, and arhar, as well as requesting an immediate reprieve from agricultural damage brought on by unseasonal rains, thousands of farmers are marching towards Mumbai. At least 10,000 farmers and tribals are marching from the Nashik region of Maharashtra towards Mumbai². It has made it to Vasind town in the Thane district, around 80 kilometers from Mumbai, in support of their demands. A 12-hour continuous electricity supply for farmers, the cancellation of agricultural debts, and assistance for onion producers at a rate of Rs 600 per quintal are among their requests³. Additionally, the demonstrators are calling for the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) to be implemented for state government workers who started working after 2005.

3.3 FOREST RIGHTS ACT 2006

Scheduled Tribes And Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights) Act, 2006

The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognizes the rights of the forest dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs. The forest management policies, including the Acts, Rules and Forest Policies of Participatory Forest Management policies in both colonial and post-colonial India, did not, till the enactment of this Act, recognize the symbiotic relationship of the STs with the forests, reflected in their dependence on the forest as well as in their traditional wisdom regarding conservation of the forests.⁴

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, also known as the Forest Rights Act, recognised the past injustice done to ST and OTFDs in its prologue. In addition to establishing democratic community-based forest governance, the act aims to protect customary rights over forest land and community forest resources (CFRs).

According to a study published in November 2017 by the Community Forest Rights - Learning and Advocacy Group Maharashtra, the Adivasi community in Maharashtra played a crucial role in the processes involved in the drafting and enactment of the FRA. This community also made sure that the push for its implementation began as soon as the Rules were passed in January 2008.

² ² News, I. T. (2023, March 15). Maharashtra News – India TV. <https://www.indiatvnews.com/maharashtra/maharashtra-drone-footage-shows-10000-farmers-tribals-marching-towards-mumbai-draw-attention-ops-shinde-govt-latest-news-2023-03-15-854872>

³ B. (2023, March 18). Maha: 58-Year-Old Dead While Marching With Farmers' Feet. THE INDIA PRINT. <https://www.theindiaprint.com/national-news-english/maha-58-year-old-dead-while-marching-with-farmers-feet-436641>

⁴ Samvaad, D. (2023, April 23). Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. Ministry of Tribal Affairs - Government of India. <https://tribal.nic.in/>

Research shows that indigenous tribes still do not have community rights over the forest land in as many as 21 districts. With less than 33% implementation, Nandurbar, Nasik, and Thane are considered "poor performing districts" (The Wire, 2018). This is due to a number of factors, including scant forest land in certain locations and a shortage of laborer's to complete the task.

According to The Wire (2018), "The Forest Rights Act gives equal weight to circumstantial and oral evidence to settle a claim in a tribal community's favour." However, claims are frequently denied for administrative reasons and incorrect interpretations of terms like "cultivation" and "possession" used in the Act⁵.

Everyone loves a good drought, as P. Sainath noted in his book, but it's important to recognise that the landless farmers and marginalized farmers who make up 85 percent of India's impoverished don't buy food grains. Price increases on groceries struck them particularly hard. Food cost is closely related to inflation. Therefore, it always has a negative influence on these areas (Sainath, 1996).

3.4 SUMMARY

Farmers become more involved in market production and investment. Farmers becoming aware of their rights and consequently reduction in their exploitation. Represent the united interest of all categories of farmers that has taken the shape of the single biggest mass movement in India today.

“Mahatma Gandhi said that agriculture is the foundation of the Indian economy fifty years ago. As we start a new century, the situation is still the same, with agriculture serving as the foundation of the communities and providing practically all of the economic support. Every single one of us relies on agriculture for food in addition to the economics.

3.5 QUESTIONS

1. Explain Nature of the Farmers Movements in Maharashtra?
2. Discuss The Kisan Long March- led by All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) in Maharashtra.
3. Comment on Farmers movements in Maharashtra.
4. Write importance of Forest Rights Act 2006.
5. Mention recent farmers movement of Maharashtra and its outcome?

⁵ <https://thewire.in/agriculture/a-month-after-long-march-have-farmers-demands-been-fulfilled>

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CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Civil society - Concept and nature
- 4.2 Movements for the right to information in Maharashtra
- 4.3 Initiatives for protection of environment
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Questions
- 4.6 References

4.0 OBJECTIVE

- To understand the role of civil society as determinant of politics in Maharashtra
- To understand the impact of social awareness and development model

4.1 CIVIL SOCIETY - CONCEPT AND NATURE

Civil society is considered an instrument of political, economic and social development and therefore this concept is one of the most common expressions when discussing the problems of modern society. The fate of modern society in the world is ultimately determined by the formation of a established civil society. This is the cornerstone of the foundation of democratic reforms.

The great revival of interest in the concept of "civil society" is especially noticeable in the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe. Modern ideas about civil society have developed as a result of a long evolution, reflecting the evolution of political systems and social relations. Therefore, the study of the history of the formation of the idea of civil society is a necessary prerequisite for understanding its current state.

The concept of "civil society" goes back to ancient thought. Among ancient thinkers, the concepts of "civil society", "political community", "state" acted as synonyms and interchangeable terms. They covered the most important areas of people's lives. The Greek polis is characterized by the merging of the civil collective with the state.

Citizens of the policy are alien to the idea of inviolability of the private sphere. Commitment to the spirit of civil collectivism was expressed in the fact that the general interests of the policy merged with the private

interests of individual citizens, and in the event of a collision, priority was undoubtedly given to the first.

"Civil society" is the third sector, which includes non-governmental, non-profit organisations, when viewed narrowly and emphasizing the significance of their participation in the processes of organising and managing public life. foundations, unions of legal entities, creative associations, charitable organizations and civil movements. It is known that civil society arises and develops within the boundaries of a particular state, based on the characteristics of the nationality of people and their common identity. In this case, the presence of citizenship is emphasized, which, according to many jurists, is a kind of means for realizing the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of members of civil society.

The characteristics of civil society includes:

Firstly, a fairly high degree of self-organization and structured society (which implies the presence of a well-developed system of public organizations and movements (including religious ones) independent of the state that do not interfere in the state-power sphere, focused on meeting the private (non-political) needs of people) ;

Secondly, a high degree of development of the general and legal culture, which determines the civic activity of members of society (which is expressed in the ability of citizens (members of society) to independently achieve socially significant goals, as well as protect their own interests);

thirdly, the fixedness of the system of personal, socio-economic, spiritual rights and freedoms of the individual;

fourthly, the presence of an effectively functioning mechanism for protecting the (state) rights and legitimate interests of citizens, including from the state itself (which implies, first of all, the presence of a developed judicial system).

In addition to these features, in the literature one can also find characteristics of civil society such as: democracy, parliamentarism, the social orientation of the state, etc.

4.2 MOVEMENTS FOR THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION IN MAHARASHTRA

The voice from Rajasthan reverberated in Maharashtra, and the Maharashtra Right to Information Bill was approved by the Maharashtra legislature as a result of persistent pressure from social activist and campaigner against corruption Anna Hazare. The Act included registered societies (including educational institutions), cooperatives, and state public sector organisations among the entities subject to its jurisdiction in addition to government and semi-government agencies. For every day that a public information officer delays in providing information, they may be penalized up to Rs. 250. The appellate body hearing the case has the jurisdiction to punish the information officer up to Rs. 2,000 for willfully

supplying false, misleading, or incomplete information. Additionally, he or she can face internal disciplinary action. Another section called for the establishment of a council to conduct public audits of the Act's operations at least once every six months. Press representatives, senior government officials, and Civil Society Organizations were to be represented on the council. The number of exclusion clauses was lowered to 10 at most.

The law aims to make it possible for the citizen to acquire information within a certain time frame, including copies of the document in which it is recorded. Additionally, it stipulates that a government official who fails to provide information on time would be fined Rs. 100 every day of delay. It suggests creating separate courts for appeals that must resolve complaints in two months. It suggests giving the Gram Sabha the authority to effectively take action against officials who are negligent in providing information at the village level.

The Right To Information Act, 2005 (India), has steadily grown to be seen as part of the "national movement" and has served as a powerful proclamation in support of other rights-based laws. The following sections of this Act went into effect on June 15, 2005: Sections 4(1), 5(1), 5(2), 12, 13, 15, 16, 24, 27, and 28. The other provisions went into effect on October 12, 2005.

Movement against corruption in Maharashtra gave rise to a similar awareness of the public's right to information as The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan's experience in Rajasthan. The Right to Information movement in Rajasthan even welcomed prominent anti-corruption activists from Maharashtra at the height of its agitation, including former Bombay Municipal Commissioner Khairnar and Marathi author Pushpa Bhawe, for assistance. They came back having seen first-hand what the conflict in Rajasthan was like and how crucial access to information was for the public in their fight against corruption, among other things.

The significance of the MKSS-led Rajasthan freedom to information campaign has now effectively spread to Maharashtra. So much so that the fight against corruption in Maharashtra had evolved to include a demand for the right of the people to information.

Anna Hazare, the face of Maharashtra's anti-corruption campaign, distributed copies of this draught law in Marathi to activists at the district and taluka levels who had assembled for a state conference at Ralegan Siddhi, in Ahmadnagar district. Hazare spent a lot of time at the conference discussing the Rajasthan right to information campaign, which was spearheaded by the MKSS. In order to affect complete change and fight corruption, he emphasised the need of the right to information. He urged the activists to learn more about this right and to study as much as they could on the numerous court rulings, laws, and movements that had affected it. He regretted that both the general Maharashtrian people and anti-corruption campaigners have failed to recognize the significance of consistently exercising their fundamental right to information.

At the moment, anti-corruption committees have been in charge of leading the fight against corruption at the district and taluka levels. Information is used by these committees and the state-level corruption campaign. However, this information was acquired through official means rather than via an informal request for information, which would have meant exercising one's right to information.

In the second part of the same year (2011), Hazare predicted a significant campaign against corruption and for the right to information. He urged the activists to be ready for this, saying he planned to lead a Pad yatra of roughly 25–30 people from Pune's Kasturba Memorial to Delhi's Rajghat in October to raise awareness of the twin problems of corruption and the right to information. He said that money was required for this reason, but he issued a warning against receiving huge or bogus gifts.

He said that the right to information must be used at the district, taluka, and village levels in order to conduct a legitimate campaign. Before the Pune-Delhi pad yatra was started, he wanted a group of dedicated employees to travel the state. Seminars and boot camps should be held all around the state, he suggested, to educate grassroots activists on their right to information.

Unfortunately, while Anna Hazare disbanded all of the district and taluka level anti-corruption committees, the Ralegan Siddhi conference on April 4 also exposed some flaws in the Maharashtra campaign. Anna Hazare's protest in Anandi near Pune in 1996 marked the beginning of the current phase of the anti-corruption movement in Maharashtra. And by 1998, there were committees in existence in 259 out of 300 talukas and 16 out of 31 districts in Maharashtra. The activists gathering at Ralegan Shindi were surprised by the unexpected collapse of these committees. When announcing the committees' dissolution, Hazare said that the individuals who, despite losing their positions, continued to work hard for the cause would inevitably become the movement's leadership and the new committees that would follow form.

Although Hazare did not provide a clear explanation for the dissolution of the committees, he did mention a few instances of blackmail carried out by individuals posing as movement activists and using committee letterhead and identity cards in response to a request for identity cards for committee members.

Ashok Ramesh Sabbal, a prominent activist and leader of the Ahmednagar district committee, the movement's most active unit, attributed the dissolution of these committees as being due to the fact that only around one-third of the district and taluka committees were really active. Another activist said that just two office bearers from each district committee were invited to the Ralegan meeting, which was intended to be attended by around 30 individuals. But just a small portion of those invited showed up; instead, around 200 more activists showed up. This act, which revealed the apathy of many committee members and the passion of many people outside of them, made it necessary to reorganize the committees.

At the top level, there are some differences in leadership as well. Although the Trust leading the anti-corruption movement, Bhrashtrachar Virodhi Janandolan Nyas, was not disbanded, its senior members, including veteran trade union leader from Pune Baba Adhav, longtime socialist G.P. Pradhan, and Marathi writer and well-known women's rights activist Pushpa Bhavé, confessed to a cooling of the relationship between the Trust members. Although there is ambiguity over the future makeup of the Trust and the disbanded committees, the differences do not impede the movement since they are solely over approaches and not the fundamental need to combat widespread corruption in politics and governance. Former IAS and Trust member Avinash Dharmadhikari had already quit because he planned to run as an independent in the 1998 Lok Sabha elections. The Trust's bylaws forbid its members from running in elections.

The right to information is a priority in the future agendas of all the prominent figures active in the fight against corruption in Maharashtra, regardless of how differently they approach the issue. Avinash Dharmadhikari's Citizen's Action Committee has created a 12-point citizen's manifesto that places a high focus on the right to information. He claims that the Action Committee is interested in collaborating with the anti-corruption movement on the right to information and corruption-fighting issues. Pushpa Bhavé and Baba Adhav are eager to advance the right to information. They are planning gatherings around the state and, if possible, a Jan Sunwai, or public hearing, which Bhavé especially cherished in Rajasthan.

Together with Dharmadhikari, G.P. Pradhan was heavily involved in the effort to have Pune Municipal Commissioner Arun Bhatia reinstated.

The campaign's focal point was the right to information. The campaign had first called for information on three charges relating to the encroachments that Bhatia had attempted to clear up and that eventually led to his expulsion. The three inquiries were whether the owners of the affected buildings requested authorization before construction, if they received the completion certificate, and whether they had received a notice of encroachment. The Bhatia campaign's three key demands were to bring Bhatia back, remove the influential encroachments, and provide the right to information. Beyond the short-term goals of the Bhatia campaign, Pradhan wants to carry on the fight for the access to information. In fact, one of Bhatia's first acts after taking office as Pune's municipal commissioner was to make all of his office's files accessible.

When the new chief minister of Maharashtra expressed his gratitude to Anna Hazare, the anti-corruption activist requested that he pass a state legislation protecting the right to information. Hazare has also written to the prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, urging him to swiftly pass a national law on the issue. He claims that individuals from the states of Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh have contacted him about a right to information campaign. He recognised the potential for a larger national network on the topic, one that might connect to the Rajasthan movement as well. He emphasizes that as a result of his social

work in Ralegan Siddhi, which transformed the village with the support of the inhabitants, he had contributed to the development of the Gram Sabha as a forum for accountability and transparency. He said that as part of his Adarsh Gaon strategy, he was attempting to duplicate this in 50 more communities. He regretted having to separate himself from the government's Adarsh Gaon project for 300 villages since his collaboration with the Maharashtra government had failed in this area.

4.3 INITIATIVES FOR PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

The environment is a complex system with several components functioning concurrently, all living things of all sizes and behaviours may coexist in it. Environmental protection initiatives begin with a knowledge of this internal connection and end at a point when. It is crucial to manage internal resources sustainably in order to maintain environmental stability. The creation of resources must thus be prioritized in order to lessen the requirements of diverse living things, particularly humans.

The NGO is crucial in identifying internal relationships, determining resource needs, organising resource management, and creating alternative resource generating plans.

Why should we safeguard the environment?

The practice of protecting the environment involves conserving the natural world and its resources so that both the environment and humanity may benefit. Protecting our local surroundings is necessary for a healthy lifestyle. To have a healthy life, we need clean air, lots of clean water, food, a favorable environment, and other living creatures around.

The Need for Environmental Protection, which is essential for maintaining human health as well, A healthy environment is the key to better existence on earth. If we want to live healthily, we need to protect the environment. Growth is causing our ecosystem to rapidly deteriorate; as a result, we must start taking action to preserve it for our own benefit.

Government's function: The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, the Biological Diversity Act of 2002, the Environment (Protection) Act and Rules of 1986, the Environment (Protection) Second Amendment Rules of 2004, the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, as amended in 1988, and the Forest (Conservation) Rules of 2003 are just a few of the Acts and Rules that the government is using to protect the environment through various departments.

All of our country's natural resources are evaluated and safeguarded by several agencies, including the Department of Forests, the State Biodiversity Board, the Pollution Control Board, the Geological Survey of India, the Zoological Survey of India, and the Botanical Survey of India. The combined efforts of these offices and groups seek to safeguard the environment and promote conservation.

It is difficult to maintain or care for such resources in the greatest possible way for anybody other than governmental entities. At this moment, Civil Society Organizations enter the scene. Civil Society Organizations are groups of individuals who are committed to achieving certain goals and who operate the Organisation. They focus on issues including analyzing resource requirements, planning resource management, and comprehending the internal relationships between distinct natural resources. They also assist the government in gathering pertinent data to support and facilitate the execution of significant environmental projects.

Environmental awareness and enforcement are more important than ever before, and they must be done immediately. In order to conserve the environment, Civil Society Organizations and the general public need to be aware of its significance. These Civil Society Organizations are in action for environmental protection include raising public awareness, developing resources and documentation, introducing alternative livelihoods, coordinating with different governmental agencies, managing and restoring habitat, etc. Numerous Civil Society Organizations are working for the aforementioned cause on a global, national, and regional scale.

Examples of CSO's / NGO's working for protection of Environment.

- I. MGVS or Marathwada Gramin Vikas Sansthan:** which was founded in 1996, supports community-based development initiatives in the fields of agriculture, sanitation, water and soil conservation, and healthcare. Due to the likelihood of droughts in Maharashtra's Marathwada region, water conservation in communities is a top priority. The company collaborates with local stakeholders to extract water, raise groundwater levels, build infrastructure for better irrigation, and restore water bodies.

Another crucial area the agency works in the area is soil conservation. In order to address the region's environmental issues holistically, MGVS also collaborates closely with governmental institutions.

- II. A nonprofit organization called *Pruthvi Molachi Foundation*:** This was set up in August 2020 in accordance with Section 8 of the Companies Act of 2013. They are using sustainable and creative methods to work towards the development and protection of many environmental, wildlife, and rural challenges. For which they have created the 3E strategy (Environment, Education, and Employment) to help us identify long-term fixes for a variety of conservation-related issues.

We, a group of social and environmental enthusiasts, joined together and founded the NGO to accelerate the process of development and

conservation after reviewing different barriers to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals¹.

III. AWAAZ Foundation's main areas of concern include noise pollution, toxic heavy metals, and air pollution. Compelled State of Maharashtra changes its sand mining policies. Sensitive places, alternative technology-enabled infrastructure employing natural and recycled sand.²

IV. Malhar Kalambe, 21, is the founder of the youth-focused nonprofit organization *Beach Please*. Malhar won a UN award for starting the beach clean-up initiative in September 2017. Through a WhatsApp message to his friends, he had just begun this campaign, which has now grown to include over 100 volunteers who have so far collected over 360 tons of trash.

V. The Aarey Conservation Group (ACG), a new age project of Vinoba Bhave's Chipko Movement, works with the Muse Foundation, Greenline, and Agni. It is a group of individuals from all across the Mumbai metropolitan region who are dedicated to preserving, enhancing, and promoting Aarey as a green, natural leisure place for the citizens of this metropolis.

They are aiming to create Aarey a popular vacation spot for residents of Mumbai and tourists alike, a beautiful green, lush location for family activities. Additionally, ACG is dedicated to promoting and protecting all of the city's other natural gems, including its beaches, roadside trees, parks, and mangroves. The Aarey Conservation Group (ACG), a new age project of Vinoba Bhave's Chipko Movement, works with the Muse Foundation, Greenline, and Agni.

It is a group of individuals from all across the Mumbai metropolitan region who are dedicated to preserving, enhancing, and promoting Aarey as a green, natural leisure place for the citizens of this metropolis. They are aiming to create Aarey a popular vacation spot for residents of Mumbai and tourists alike, a beautiful green, lush location for family activities.

VI. Earth5R located in Andheri. In order to fill a gap in the community-based plastic recycling process, Earth5R has also brought together locals, ragpickers, and recyclers.

VII. Vanashakti is a nonprofit organization whose main focuses include the preservation of forests, mangroves, and wetland ecosystems, environmental education in urban and rural schools, sustainable livelihoods for populations dependent on the forest, and scientific research into local environmental deterioration. This was one of the campaign's most successful outcomes.

¹ About Us | Pruthvi Molachi Foundation. (n.d.). Pruthvi Molachi Foun.
<https://www.pruthvimolachi.org/about-us>

² <https://awaaz.org/awaaz-foundation/>

4.4 SUMMARY

to make the country go from a representative to a participatory democracy, where all levels of government and the people they serve are directly accountable to the people for their acts and inaction, strengthening the foundations of the biggest democracy in the world. In the next years, a lot more will need to be done to realize this promise. When there is a fight for dominance and control, there is really no time to spend. If they don't stick together and keep trying to reclaim the authority that is rightly theirs, those in power with vested interests will push them and take advantage of the weak points in the general population.

4.5 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept & nature of civil society.
2. What do you understand by right to information in Maharashtra? Explain.
3. Discuss Movements for the right to information in Maharashtra with reference to Anna Hazare.
4. Comment on Initiatives for protection of environment by various NGOs / Civil society organizations.

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