

Social Movements in India

Day 26 — the closing capsule of Paper I, and one of the syllabus's densest units. Every movement, scholar, debate and table from the Foundation & OGP class, compressed for a single clean pass. **Revise → write a little → don't break the chain.**

Listed PYQs on this chapter — a heuristic, not official weightage: **3 × 10m · 4 × 15m · 1 × 20m.**

1 What is a Social Movement?

An **organised, collective** and **sustained** effort, built on shared grievance or purpose, directed at social change or resistance to it, pursued through both institutional and non-institutional methods. In India these movements pulled the excluded — women, workers, peasants, Dalits, Adivasis, ecological and rights groups — into public politics. They are political education, public pressure, rights assertion and democratic correction, not mere protest.

Definitions

"organized efforts, on the part of excluded groups, to promote or resist changes in the structure of society that involve recourse to noninstitutional forms of political participation." — **Doug McAdam**

"A series of contentious performances, displays, and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others." — **Charles Tilly**

"a deliberate collective endeavor to promote change in any direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution, or withdrawal into utopian community." — **Paul Wilkinson**

Herbert Blumer: movements are "collective enterprises to establish a new order of life," born of unrest. **Sidney Tarrow:** a "contentious politics" of sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities.

Three core elements — **collective action, social change, common purpose** — carried by grievance, mobilisation, leadership, ideology, organisation and public action.

2 Social vs Political Movements

A **social movement** is a collective struggle for social transformation — questioning hegemony, property and power relations, hierarchy and identity-based exclusion; it may seek to influence authority, but state power is not always its immediate aim. A **political movement** directly seeks state power, policy change, institutional control, or change in constitutional-legal arrangements.

Rudolf Heberle: all movements carry political implications even when they do not seek power. **Andre Gunder Frank** and **Marta Fuentes:** social movements do not necessarily seek state power. The **New York Times** formulation — "Social movements seek more autonomy rather than state power."

Assessment

Often the distinction is semantic: social movements create social power; political movements seek state power. Indian movements typically combine both — Chipko (ecology + livelihood rights), Narmada Bachao Andolan (environment + displacement + policy), Dalit movement (civil liberty + dignity + representation), women's movement (social reform + law reform + political participation).

3 Anatomy — Types, Paths & Components

Type	Aim	Example
Transformative	Transform consciousness; reform individual and group behaviour	Narayana Guru — reform among the Ezhava community, Kerala
Reformist	Gradual, incremental change within existing institutions	Linguistic reorganisation of states (1960s); Right to Information campaign
Revolutionary	Fundamental change in social relations; often seizure of power	Bolshevik Revolution; Naxalite movement against oppressive landowners

Two paths

Institutional — petitions, elections, legislative lobbying, court cases, public hearings, legal claims. **Non-institutional (direct action)** — dharna, satyagraha, civil disobedience, strike, boycott, blockade, occupation, mass mobilisation.

"direct action can be defined as an extra-constitutional political technique that takes the form of a group action, is aimed at some political change directed against the government in power." — **Rajni Kothari**

Rajni Kothari: direct action is not automatically democratic — it is desirable only when it expands political freedom; movements are democratic when they deepen participation, accountability and justice, dangerous when they promote exclusion, violence or authoritarian politics.

Five components

Objectives Ideology Programmes Leadership Organisation

Immediate objective (specific issue) vs long-term objective (change in authority/power). Ideology may guide the movement or evolve during it. Components are

not static — some have strong leadership but loose organisation; some are spontaneous, then institutionalised; some begin narrow, then widen.

4 Four Theories of Social Movements

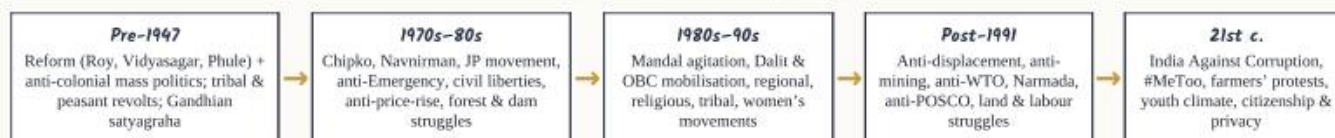
Theory	Core claim	Scholars
Relative Deprivation	Movements arise from the perceived gap between value expectations and value capabilities — injustice felt in comparison with others, not mere poverty	James C. Davies, Ted Robert Gurr
Resource Mobilisation	Grievance alone is not enough; movements need money, leadership, networks, communication, legal support, media and institutional access	John D. McCarthy, Mayer N. Zald
Political Process	Movements emerge when political opportunities open — legitimacy crisis, divided elites, new laws, court openings, weak state response	Charles Tilly, Doug McAdam
New Social Movement	Not centred on class or redistribution; focus on identity, autonomy, quality of life, dignity, environment, gender, peace, culture	Alain Touraine, Jurgen Habermas, Alberto Melucci

Ted Robert Gurr — three models: **decremental** (capabilities fall, expectations stable), **aspirational** (expectations rise, capabilities stable), **J-curve / progressive** (both rise together, then capabilities stagnate or fall). Motivational links: frustration-aggression, threat-aggression, dissonance, anomie, conflict. **Limitation:** deprivation is necessary but not sufficient — movement also needs awareness, organisation and belief in change; Gurr leans on psychology over structure.

Jurgen Habermas: movements are defensive reactions protecting the public and private spheres from the expanding state system and market economy. **Alain Touraine:** struggles over cultural models in post-industrial society. **Alberto Melucci:** movements produce and transform collective identity.

5 History of Social Movements in India

From social reform to the digital age



Pre-independence movements fused social reform, religious and caste reform, women's rights, and peasant-tribal protest against colonial forest laws, revenue extraction and land alienation; Bhakti and Sufi traditions supplied moral criticism of hierarchy. Post-independence India saw state-building (constitutional abolition of untouchability, Green Revolution) alongside new conflicts. **Digital mobilisation** aids visibility, coordination, documentation and global solidarity — but risks surveillance, misinformation, selective outrage and weak organisational depth.

6 Old vs New Social Movements

Two grammars of collective action



Rajendra Singh: NSMs seek to recognise state–society–economy relations and to open a public space for democratic discourse on autonomy and identity, confining themselves to what **Jean Cohen** calls “self-limiting radicalism” — challenging domination without necessarily capturing the state.

New contradictions they expose

Identity vs universal citizenship · development vs ecology · recognition vs redistribution · local autonomy vs national planning · gender justice vs patriarchy · minority rights vs majoritarian politics. **Stuart Hall:** identity is “a social construction, it is a continually shifting description of ourselves.” **Alberto Melucci** and **Manuel Castells:** identity can be a site of resistance but can also feed fundamentalism, ethnic separatism and narrow nationalism.

Not purely chronological

Andre Gunder Frank and **Marta Fuentes:** classical working-class movements are products of 19th-century industry, but “peasant, localist community, ethnic/nationalist, religious, and even feminist/women’s movements have existed for centuries and even millennia.” **K. S. Singh** on the Birsā Munda movement in Chhota Nagpur — a struggle to recover the “lost kingdom” against the Dikus — shows identity and autonomy were fought for long before.

7 Do New Social Movements Succeed?

Mixed record — some shaped laws, some changed public debate, some delayed projects, some won symbolic victories; many failed to transform the development model.

Reasons for success	Reasons for failure
Strong local mobilisation; national & international NGO support; media attention; expert studies; court intervention; opposition-party support; moral legitimacy	State-corporate alliance; weak organisation; localised scope; lack of resources; repression; low ecological consciousness; absence from party manifestos; development framed as national interest

Examples of traction: Chipko, Silent Valley, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Niyamgiri, Aarey. **Kashipur and Lanjigarh** show the pattern — where opposition parties back a movement, success is likelier; where the state and transnational corporations are tightly linked, suppression is easier.

8 Social Movements & Democracy

Movements deepen democracy by expanding participation beyond elections: they turn grievances into public claims, convert passive subjects into active citizens, widen the agenda (environment, gender, caste, livelihood, privacy, sexuality, displacement), and shape legislation, judicial decisions, executive policy and rights discourse.

Scholars: **Huntington** and **Rajni Kothari** — movements rise as the gap between expectations and system performance widens. **Robert Dahl's** pluralism explains how diverse groups influence policy. **Nancy Fraser's** **participatory parity** frames struggles for recognition and redistribution. Marxist theory reads labour, peasant and Naxalite movements as struggles against exploitation; Gandhian civil disobedience still shapes non-violent protest.

Counter-movements

Not all mobilisation is progressive. Anti-reservation agitations (1980s), Ram Janmabhoomi / Hindu Rashtra mobilisation, the Dharma Sabha's opposition to Roy's anti-sati campaign, and resistance to girls' education and widow remarriage show democracy can be used to defend hierarchy. Movements must be judged by their relation to freedom, equality and justice.

Direct action — the JP Movement debate

Rajni Kothari (1960): direct action is desirable only if it offers greater political freedom than the existing arrangement. In **In the Name of Democracy: JP Movement and Emergency**, **Bipan Chandra** judged the JP movement to have an "undefined objective, loose organisation, and uncertainty in its philosophy," arguing that "Rather than defending democracy, the movement was responsible for placing it in jeopardy."

"The only nation where the underprivileged segment's participation has surpassed the wealthy segment's is India." — **Yogendra Yadav**

Indian movements draw energy from Dalits, Adivasis, peasants, workers, rural women, fisher folk, landless labourers and slum dwellers — Indian democracy is not only an elite constitutional arrangement but is shaped by the organised pressure of the disadvantaged.

9 Environmental Movements — Character & Roots

Collective struggles over ecological security, livelihood, displacement, forest and water rights, pollution, sustainable development and environmental justice. In India they are not merely conservationist — they are tied to poverty, livelihood, caste, class, gender, tribal autonomy and democracy.

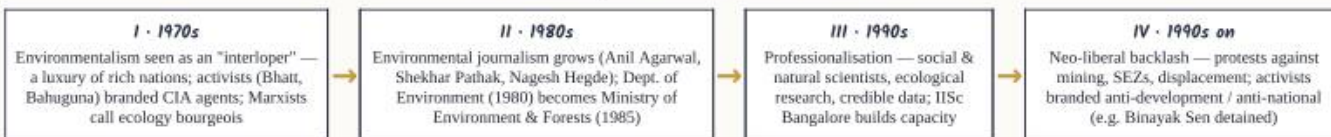
Ramachandra Guha: there are "varieties of environmentalism" in India. Unlike much Western environmentalism, Indian struggles are usually led by women, poor communities, tribal groups, peasants, fisher folk and those directly hit by ecological degradation.

Historical background

Pre-1947: tribal resistance to colonial forest laws; the Bishnoi sacrifice at Khejarli, Rajasthan (1763); Mulshi Satyagraha (1921) led by Senapati Bapat against a dam in the Lonavala hills. **Post-1947 triggers:** Stockholm Conference (1972); Club of Rome's **Limits to Growth** (1972); Project Tiger (1973); B. B. Vohra's EPW article on soil erosion and land degradation; the Chipko Movement (1973).

10 Guha's Four Phases of Indian Environmentalism

From "interlopers" to neo-liberal backlash



11 Ideological Strands (Gadgil & Guha)

Strand	Position
Crusading Gandhians	Reject the modern way of life on a moral / religious idiom; hold Eastern civilisation apathetic to economic gain; spread a non-modern ideology rooted in Indian culture
Ecological Marxists	Read degradation in political-economic terms — unequal access to resources, not a values issue, best explains India's environmental decline
Appropriate Technology	Seek synthesis of agriculture and industry, big and small, Western and Eastern technology; demonstrate socio-technical alternatives rather than attack the system
Wilderness Enthusiasts	Document forest and species decline; use “biological diversity” science and “species equality” morality to demand more parks and total bans on human activity
Scientific Conservationists	Stress efficiency, management, planning and technical regulation

“Crusading Gandhians, Appropriate Technologists and Ecological Marxists represent the three most forceful strands in the environment-development debate in India.” — **Ramachandra Guha**

12 Deep vs Shallow Ecology & New Environmentalism

Shallow ecology	Deep ecology
Utilitarian, short-term; protects environment for human benefit; places humans above other species (e.g. recycling garbage)	All living beings valuable; nature has intrinsic worth; humans and other species in one moral frame (e.g. tree planting, forest conservation)

Deep ecology challenges anthropocentric development; shallow ecology fits reformist policy more easily.

New environmentalism

Stresses affected people's knowledge, local context, dispersed information, community participation and sustainable use — and accepts that properly harnessed economic development can improve the environment. Traditional environmentalism often treats people as external to nature and ignores local knowledge.

Sunita Narain

Environmentalism is not only about planting trees or protecting tigers — environment is about **democracy**. People must be seen as owners and custodians of natural resources; development must be sustainable. Environmental movements resist commodification, monopolisation, inequitable distribution and disempowerment of communities.

13 Major Environmental Movements

Movement	When / where	Focus & leaders
Chipko	1973, Garhwal (Uttarakhand)	Stop commercial felling by hugging trees; women at the core — Sunderlal Bahuguna, Chandi Prasad Bhatt, Gaura Devi
Narmada Bachao Andolan	1985, Narmada river	Displacement, submergence, rehabilitation; Adivasis, farmers, environmentalists, activists
Appiko	Uttara Kannada & Shimoga, Karnataka	Southern counterpart of Chipko; Panduranga Hegde ; extended the method to the Western Ghats
Silent Valley	Palakkad, Kerala; National Park 1985	Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad vs hydropower; Salim Ali 's biodiversity argument

Chipko — the anatomy

“Chipko” = to stick, to embrace. Earlier inspirations: Bishnoi resistance (1763), Sri Dev Suman, Mira Behn, Sarala Behn. Methods: tree-hugging, satyagraha, non-cooperation, hunger fasts, Bhagavad Gita readings, tying rakhees around wounded trees; Bajjis musicians and Ghanshyam Sailani's poems mobilised villagers. It was at once environmental, peasant, women's, regional and subaltern-cultural — a critique of the development model.

“Ecology is economy.” — **Chipko slogan**

Significance: questioned state policy favouring industrial elites; linked ecology with livelihood; became a symbol of **ecofeminism**; revived “forest satyagraha” (per **Vandana Shiva** and **Jayanta Bandyopadhyay**); influenced the 15-year ban on commercial green felling in the U.P. Himalaya and the National Forest Policy, 1988; won the Right Livelihood Award (1988). **Ramachandra Guha** calls it “Environmentalism of the poor.”

UPSC 2019 - 10m Write a short note on the significance of the Chipko Movement.

UPSC 2013 Comment: Compare and contrast the Chipko Movement with Narmada Bachao Andolan.

14 Recent Environmental Movements

Movement	Issue
Climate Action Strike (2019)	Student action across metros; Greta Thunberg, Bittu K. R.; demand climate action
Right to Breathe (2019)	New Delhi citizens' movement on air pollution and public health
Save Dehing Patkai (2020)	Assam; against opencast mining in Dehing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary (98.59 ha)
Save Aarey (2019–20)	Mumbai; against Metro-3 car shed in Aarey Colony; legal action + urban protest
Save the Sundarban (2020)	Online campaign after cyclone Amphan (#SaveTheSundarban)
Tehri Dam protests	Sunderlal Bahuguna ; social & ecological impact (dam completed 2006)
Anti-POSCO	Odisha; against steel plant; Abhay Sahoo; project cancelled 2017
Niyamgiri	Indigenous resistance to mining — tribal autonomy, ecology, resource justice
Kudankulam	Fishing communities vs nuclear plant (Tamil Nadu) over radiation, environment

15 Tuticorin (Sterlite) Environmental Movement

Protest against the Sterlite Copper plant of Vedanta in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu — resistance since the 1990s, sharp visibility in 2018, demanding closure of the smelter over pollution and health.

Findings & institutional failures

NEERI report (2011) found high copper, lead, cadmium and fluoride in groundwater; a 2013 gas leak brought a fine and temporary closure. The plant sat 14 km from Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park (norm: >25 km from an eco-sensitive zone); the green-belt requirement was allegedly cut from 250 m to 25 m. The **Centre for Science and Environment** noted three states had rejected the proposal before Tamil Nadu accepted it; a faulty EIA was alleged.

Vandana Shiva called for shutdown.

Base: locals, fisher folk, small farmers, Dalit communities, women, church groups, traders, student unions, cultural activists — women from fishing and Dalit backgrounds became its moral voices. **Methods:** dharna, hunger strike, social media (100,000+ online), documentation, Tamil folk songs and art. **State response:** the Pollution Control Board had rejected clearance yet construction continued; it culminated in police firing — eleven died — and the factory was sealed in May 2018.

Assessment: the case exposes the conflict between industrialisation and environmental justice and weak governance; the Second ARC's **triple bottom line** (People, Planet, Profits) is invoked; **S. N. Sahu** reads it as reinforcing Swaraj and democracy; **Sunita Narain's** critique applies — movements close some plants but fail to change the development model.

UPSC 2018 · 15m Critically analyse the environmentalist movement in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.

16 Environmentalism of the Poor

Struggles by poor and marginal communities against ecological damage that threatens livelihood, health, culture, autonomy and access to land, water and forests.

Joan Martinez-Alier

Describes environmentalism of the poor as the struggles and practices the poor engage in when threatened by **ecological distribution conflicts** — over mining, dams, land grabbing, biomass, oil, gas and waste. It is rooted in survival, not leisure; links human rights and environmental rights; combines distribution, recognition and participation; often speaks in idioms of livelihood, dignity and the sacredness of nature.

Indian examples: Chipko, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Niyamgiri, anti-POSCO, Tuticorin, forest-rights struggles. **Qualification:** the thesis does not claim the poor are always environmentalists — only that in many extraction and waste conflicts the poor stand with nature because their life depends on it. **Ramachandra Guha** distinguishes Northern “full stomach” environmentalism (led by scientists) from Southern “empty stomach” environmentalism (led by the poor).

UPSC 2023 · 10m Comment on the environmentalism of the poor.

17 Constitution & Environment

The Constitution is an **enabling document** for environmental protection, expanded through judicial interpretation.

“It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures.” — Article 51-A(g)

Directive Principles: Article 47 (public health, which includes environmental protection); Article 48 (scientific agriculture and animal husbandry); Article 48-A — “the state shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.”

Article 21 has been expanded by the Supreme Court to include the right to a healthy, pollution-free environment. Key cases: **Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India** (expanded Art 21); the **Dehradun Quarrying Case; M. C. Mehta v. Union of India** (pollution-free environment under Art 21); Kovar G. B. Bharucha v. Excise Commissioner, Ajmer (environment vs freedom of trade). Article 19(1)(a) does not cover loudspeakers causing noise pollution. PIL runs through Articles 32 and 226.

Statutes: Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 · Water Act, 1974 · Water Cess Act, 1977 · Forest Conservation Act, 1980 · Air Act, 1981 · Environment Protection Act, 1986 · PESA, 1996 · National Environmental Appellate Authority Act, 1997 · Biological Diversity Act, 2002 · Forest Rights Act, 2006. Institutions:

UPSC 2016 · 15m Critically examine the provisions made in the Constitution for the protection of Environment.

18 Environmental Movements & Governance

Movements shaped governance by raising awareness, forcing state response, influencing laws, triggering judicial activism, exposing ecological injustice, questioning development models and building citizen participation.

Competing interpretations

Bajwa and Bains and **O. P. Dwivedi**: governance emerged partly from global initiatives (Stockholm). **Subir Sinha**: from resource-intensive development causing ecological imbalance and deprivation. **Atul Kohli**: from societal forces and movements. **Vandana Shiva** and **Ashish Kothari**: from environmental groups and public awareness. **Madhav Gadgil**: Chipko and Narmada forced the state to rethink extraction — People's Biodiversity Registers and the Gadgil Committee on the Western Ghats reflect participatory governance.

Movements influenced cost-benefit analysis, EIA, environmental auditing, risk analysis, public inquiries, legal reform and judicial activism. Through PIL the Supreme Court acted on Ganga pollution, vehicular emissions, deforestation, quarrying and industrial pollution — the **M. C. Mehta** cases being the model.

Criticism & assessment

Ramachandra Guha calls **Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa** the founder of modern Indian environmentalism — village economy, resource conservation, distinguishing selfish Western "pack-type" from collective Indian "herd-type" societies. **Verrier Elwin**: forests are central to tribal life and rebellion. **Ulrich Beck** and **Anthony Giddens**: modernity is a "risk society." **Robert Bullard**: environmental harm falls disproportionately on the marginalised. Weaknesses: low environmental consciousness, local and reactive movements, legal wins that do not change ground reality, weak NGT/EIA implementation, and ecology rarely a manifesto priority.

"Polluted skies, dead rivers, disappearing forests, falling water tables, ever increasing hills of untreated waste, displaced peasants and tribes" — India as a "Basket case of all sorts of environmental tragedies." — Ramachandra Guha

UPSC 2024 · 20m Discuss the role of environmental movements in shaping the environmental governance in India.

UPSC 2012 Discuss the impact of environmentalist movements on government policies in recent years.

UPSC 2009 "The environmental movements have challenged the policy and pattern of economic development in post-independent India." Analyse with examples.

UPSC 2022 The high concentration of economic activities and consumption patterns in the post-liberalisation period has led to the failure of environmental movements in India. Elucidate.

19 Civil Liberties & Human Rights — Meaning & Constitution

Civil liberties are essential freedoms for civilised existence — individual liberty, freedom from arbitrary arrest, protection from punishment without trial, freedom of movement, conscience, expression, assembly and the press. They are secure only when the state respects rights.

Civil liberties	Civil rights
Broad freedoms against arbitrary state interference — speech, movement, conscience, personal liberty, due process	Protective rights to equal treatment — against discrimination on caste, gender, race, disability, religion, community

Ask: which right is affected, and whose right is affected. **Nilanjan Dutta (From Subject to Citizen)** traces India's civil-rights demands to the 19th century, when the educated among the subject population sought equal employment opportunity, press freedom and an end to racial discrimination in the courts. A wider civil-liberty movement grew after the Rowlatt Act (1919), Jallianwala Bagh, Khilafat and Non-Cooperation.

Constitutional framework

Justiciable Fundamental Rights, plus social-economic rights via Directive Principles and affirmative action. **Preventive detention** is a major concern — it sits inside Part III, can operate in normal times, Article 22 safeguards have loopholes, and UAPA amendments enlarge state power. Emergency provisions (Articles 358, 359) follow the Weimar Constitution; the 44th Amendment shielded Articles 20 and 21 from suspension. **Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar** built minority protections in, knowing democracy alone does not guarantee minority rights (constitutional morality).

20 Civil Liberties Movement — Judiciary to Emergency

The higher judiciary guards civil liberties: Supreme Court (Article 32), High Courts (Article 226), through the writs of habeas corpus, mandamus, prohibition, quo warranto and certiorari. **Justice Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati** institutionalised **Public Interest Litigation**, later central to civil, environmental and social rights.

Early organisations: Madras Civil Liberties Union (1947), Civil Liberties Committee in Bengal (1948), Bombay Civil Liberties Conference (1949); repression after the 1948 CPI ban drew in Saratchandra Bose, Meghnad Saha, Kripiprasad Chattopadhyay. **Naxalite context (1960s)**: APDR Kolkata (1972), APCLC (1974), Punjab Association for Democratic Rights exposed state violence.

Emergency (June 1975): censorship, mass arrests, banned rights bodies (APDR banned Aug 1975; APCLC activists jailed). Post-Emergency, human-rights work widened from individual to community, religion, ethnicity, gender, caste and class. **Smitu Kothari** classified issues into state terror (torture, fake encounters), non-implementation of guaranteed rights, and socially structured violence of caste/class/gender. **Jayaprakash Narayan** inspired the People's Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights (1976), later splitting into **PUCL** (liberal, courts/PIL) and **PUDR** (Marxist, grassroots).

21 Human Rights Movement in India

Human rights are rights people hold simply because they are human — moral rights, distinct from legal rights, due to all regardless of race, caste, community, region, nation, gender or religion.

“No one is higher or inferior, all should work for the welfare of all and advance together.” — the Vedas

Ancient strands: Kautilya’s welfare-state idea (the ruler’s happiness in the subjects’), Manu’s civil and legal rights, Jain and Buddhist support for dignity, Ashoka’s welfare. **Pre-independence:** the Congress Bombay session (1918) declaration of rights; S. Sathyamurthy’s **Rights of Citizens**; the Nehru Report (1928–29). **Jawaharlal Nehru** founded the Indian Civil Liberties Union (7 Nov 1936) with Rabindranath Tagore as President and Sarojini Naidu as working president, promising no “black law” in free India.

After independence rights activism first slowed — **Aparna Mahanta**’s “grey years” — then revived with state repression, Naxalite crackdown, Emergency, preventive detention, custodial violence, undertrials, caste atrocity, gender violence and displacement. Constitutional-parliamentary moments: A. K. Gopalan (preventive detention); Champakam Dorairajan (leading to the First Amendment); the Dalit Mahasabha after the Karamchedu massacre (1985) and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989; PESA, 1996.

“Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy ... a way of life which recognises liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life.” — Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar

22 Globalisation, Rights & Surveillance

Liberalisation (1991) shifted India from state-centred to market-centred development. **Upendra Baxi** calls this the rise of **human rights markets** — which “comprise a series of transactions across a range of economic actors that pursue competition within a framework of collaboration.”

Positive: private media exposed abuses, international NGOs raised pressure, rights discourse globalised, the National Human Rights Commission was set up (1993). **Negative:** market-led displacement, new corporate-project conflicts, professionalised rights language, NGO legitimacy concerns. Rights newly recognised through PIL include livelihood, rehabilitation, speedy trial, education, health, information and clean environment; still contested are the right to development and the right to oppose certain forms of development.

Digital surveillance

India recognised privacy as a fundamental right in 2017. Since 2013 surveillance capacity has expanded — risk of a shift from targeted to mass surveillance, weak privacy regulation, integration of public and private data, face recognition, AI-driven drones and COVID-era health surveillance — the danger of a “surveillance democracy.” References: the Justice A. P. Shah Report (2012), the 2017 privacy judgment, UDHR, ICCPR and the UNGA resolution on privacy in the digital age. HRW World Report 2023 held that authorities “intensified and extended” their crackdown and “continued to limit free expression and peaceful assembly” in Jammu and Kashmir.

23 Right to Information

Democracy rests on trust and consent: **John Locke**’s “Trust” and “Consent” require a free flow of information about government decisions. RTI draws legitimacy from the UDHR (1948) and the ICCPR (1976).

The **RTI Act, 2005** made access to information a statutory right — defining information, public authority and record; covering constitutional, legislative, executive and judicial bodies; providing suo motu disclosure; creating Central and State Information Commissions; requiring information within 30 days; and overriding the Official Secrets Act, 1923 where the public interest in disclosure outweighs harm.

Exposed: the 2G, Commonwealth Games and coal-block scams, and village-level PDS leakages — strengthening transparency, social audit and participatory governance. **Challenges:** pendency of nearly 3.2 lakh requests, misuse through vague queries, privacy conflicts, political parties outside its ambit, intimidation of activists, and the RTI Amendment, 2019 over the autonomy of Information Commissioners. **Measures:** deadline-driven appointments, blockchain/AI routing, tracking of applications, fines for withholding, and tightening of Section 8 exemptions.

UPSC 2016 Discuss the Right to Information and underline the challenges being posed before it.

24 Dilemmas of Human Rights Movements

Structural constraints: state insensitivity, security laws, preventive detention, AFSPA, police impunity, weak NHRC powers, undertrials, no police reform.

Nandita Haksar: the movement works within limits set by nationalist discourse — zero tolerance towards terrorism often becomes zero tolerance towards rights activism.

Baxi on a legitimacy crisis

Upendra Baxi: the movement faces a crisis of legitimacy — the growth of a “human rights industry,” professionalisation without moral commitment, money-making tendencies and silence on non-state-actor violations.

Challenges by scholars: **Rajeev Bhargava** and **Zoya Hasan** (political interference); **Arvind Rajagopal** and **Robin Jeffrey** (media sensationalism); **Satish Deshpande** and **S. Anandhi** (diversity of issues, hard to unify); **Nandini Sundar** (limited capacity); **Pratap Bhanu Mehta** and **Amitabh Kundu** (public apathy); **Ujwal Kumar Singh** and **Gopal Guru** (surveillance and repression).

Analysis: **Amartya Sen** (rights are intrinsic to development — development as expansion of freedom); **Jean Dreze** (tension between growth and social rights); **Partha Chatterjee** (civil society vs political society — rights movements often privilege formal civil society); **Arundhati Roy** (large projects damage

indigenous communities); **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak** (rights discourse must listen to subaltern voices).

UPSC 2014 Comment: The dilemmas of the human rights movements in India.

25 Ambedkar, the Dalit Movement & Civil Liberty

The Dalit movement began against untouchability, caste oppression, exclusion from public space, and denial of education and dignity. **Jyotiba Phule** laid the base — education for Dalits, a challenge to Brahmanical hierarchy, and the Satyashodhak Samaj (1873). **Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar** turned Dalit politics into a movement for civil liberty, social justice and constitutional democracy. His call “Educate, Agitate and Organize” was given at the All India Depressed Classes Conference, Nagpur, July 1942.

Educate	Agitate	Organize
Intellectual awakening, self-respect, rejection of caste fatalism; People's Education Society (1945); journals Mooknayak , Bahishkrit Bharat , Samata , Janta	Peaceful mobilisation — Mahad Satyagraha for water at Chavadar Tank (1927), Kalaram Temple Entry Satyagraha, Nashik (1930)	Scattered humiliation into collective strength — Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha (1924), Samaj Samta Sang (1927), Scheduled Castes Federation, Independent Labour Party

Constitutional contribution: abolition of untouchability, anti-discrimination and equality provisions, reservations, right against exploitation, freedom of religion, minority protections, DPSP, and the National Commissions for SCs and STs; also the Poona Pact, the Hindu Code Bill, service on the Governor General's Executive Council (1942–46), and conversion to Buddhism (1956). **Christophe Jaffrelot** praised his uplift of the “Bahujans” at a pan-India level; **Ramachandra Guha** called him a “Darling of the Dispossessed.”

UPSC 2023 - ISM Dr. Ambedkar's clarion call, “Educate, Agitate and Organize”, strategizes the Dalit movement towards achieving civil liberty. Discuss.

26 Women's Movement — Meaning & Early Phases

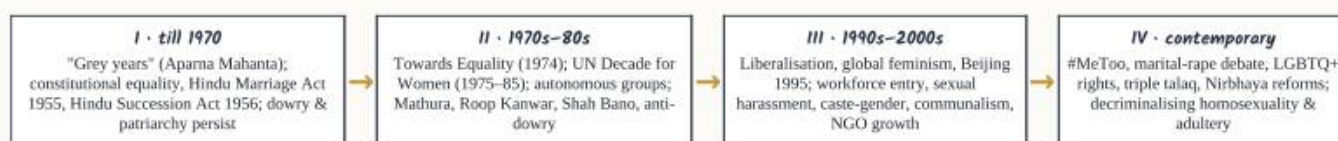
A struggle against patriarchy, gender inequality, violence, discrimination, unequal property rights, exclusion from education, unequal representation and the sexual division of labour. **Neera Desai** saw it as rooted in feminist consciousness and organised effort for women's equality and liberation.

Gail Omvedt's four types	Whether a “women's movement”
Men and women fight a common oppression (issue not sexual discrimination)	Not a women's movement in the strict sense
Women-only on general issues (slum improvement, price rise)	Constructive value (collective strength), but may not challenge patriarchy
Women's reform movements (education, abolition of sati)	Not full women's movements — do not always attack the structure
Women's liberation movements (against sexual division of labour, patriarchy)	Women's movements in the proper sense

Before independence: a 19th-century social-reform phase (Roy, Vidyasagar, Phule) on sati, polygamy, female infanticide, widow remarriage, marriage age, education and property; then a nationalist phase where Gandhi's mass politics widened women's public role. **Tanika Sarkar** (patriarchal structures), **Geraldine Forbes** (neglect of women's education), **Uma Chakravarti** (legal subordination). **After independence:** demands shifted from male-led reform to gender equality, questioning the division of labour and building autonomous women's organisations.

27 Women's Movement since the 1970s

Four phases — from “grey years” to the contemporary era



Towards Equality (1974), by the Committee on the Status of Women in India, exposed the declining sex ratio, violence, discrimination and falling female participation in politics and the economy — shifting women's issues from welfare to development. Autonomous groups of 1975–85 took up dowry, work, land rights, participation, Dalit women, fundamentalism and media representation. Organisations: Majlis, Awaaz-e-Niswan, Saheli, Vimochana, Manushi, Jagoree, the All India Dalit Women Conference.

28 Women's Empowerment & Democracy

Empowerment expands education, dignity, bodily autonomy, economic capacity, legal rights, participation, representation and voice in decision-making. It deepens democracy — strengthening grassroots democracy, bringing private violence into public debate, and making democracy more deliberative. The **73rd Constitutional Amendment** raised women's participation in Panchayati Raj and created a new leadership base.

Scholars: **Nivedita Menon** (structural change and intersectionality); **Zoya Hasan** (Indian feminism as pluralistic); **Arundhati Roy** (feminism linked to land, displacement and economic justice); **Chandra Talpade Mohanty** and **Sarojini Sahoo** (intersectionality); **Devaki Jain** (the movement at a crossroad); **Romila Thapar** (identity politics has dealt the movement a serious blow); **Kate Millet**'s “sexual politics” and **Shulamith Firestone**'s “dialectic of sex” remain relevant. **Sudha Pai**'s “sarpanch pati” warns that formal representation is not substantive empowerment.

UPSC 2000 Comment: Women empowerment in India and its impact on democracy.

29 Reservation Policy for Women

Opposition

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru & Sarojini Naidu — may compromise merit / confidence; win on merit

Towards Equality (1974) — opposed in Parliament and assemblies, favoured local bodies

Ela Bhatt — preferred economic empowerment (the SEWA approach)

Sudha Pai — warns of “Pati Panchayats” / “sarpanch pati”; stresses female literacy

Support

Laura Keenan — stagnant women’s representation reflects hostile social conditions, not lack of talent

Rohini Pande — reservation reduces prejudice against women leaders

Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner — Panchayat reservation improves women’s social mobility

Esther Duflo & Raghavendra Chattopadhyay — women-led councils invested more in public goods (e.g. drinking water)

UPSC 2001 The women activists did not support Quota till 1974. What led to the subsequent change in their stand?

30 Anti-Arrack Movement

A mass uprising of rural women in Andhra Pradesh, beginning in Nellore district and the village of Dubagunta in the early 1990s, emerging through the National Literacy Campaign (1990) — where women discussed everyday problems and named arrack as a chief cause of suffering.

Causes: alcoholism, domestic violence, financial insecurity, social disintegration, liquor contractors’ political power and the state’s Varun Vahini programme supplying alcohol sachets. Women led protests, marches, picketing, destruction of brewing material, night patrols, fines and sit-ins — most with little formal education or prior agitation experience.

Feminist significance

Susie Tharu and **K. Lalitha** read it as a feminist struggle — women challenged patriarchy in home and public sphere alike. **Vina Mazumdar** saw a crucial moment: rural women changed public policy. It gave practical meaning to “The Personal is the Political.” Chief Minister Kotla Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy banned arrack from 1 October 1993.

UPSC 2024 - 10m Comment on women’s role in anti-arrack movement.

31 Contemporary Women’s Struggles

#MeToo

Encouraged survivors of sexual assault and harassment to speak publicly through social media, connecting women across countries, classes and professions. Achievements: exposed the scale of harassment, challenged elite impunity and progressive-male hypocrisy, weakened victim-blaming, built survivor solidarity. Criticism: weak intersectionality, elite-urban visibility, limited reach among informal and rural women, and difficulty of legal follow-up.

“After ages of silence, suffering and misplaced guilt, sexual assault is explosively emerging as one of the telling dysfunctions of present-day capitalist society.” — **Angela Davis**

Catharine A. MacKinnon: #MeToo is “eroding the two biggest barriers to ending sexual harassment in law and in life: the disbelief and trivializing dehumanization of its victims.” **Schultz:** harassment is more about sexism than sex. **Burke Langone:** it is “a symptom of a larger, systemic inequality and systemic pattern of exclusion.”

Ecofeminism

Links climate change, gender inequality, social injustice and environmental degradation to masculine domination. **Vandana Shiva:** women and nature share a reciprocal, non-exploitative relationship; the degradation of both is tied to colonialism; women’s knowledge makes them central to biodiversity. **Bina Agarwal’s** critique: Shiva groups all developing-country women into one category and ignores historical, cultural and social processes. Chipko was an early ecofeminist movement — forest loss raised women’s labour and made them stakeholders in afforestation.

Dalit women & intersectionality

Dalit women face overlapping caste, class, gender, and state / upper-caste / police violence. The National Federation of Dalit Women grew from a process begun in 1987 (first national meeting in Bangalore under the Christian Dalit Liberation Movement). They argued mainstream women’s groups ignored caste-based sexual violence and treated women as homogeneous; **Gabriele Dietrich** and **Gail Omvedt** showed how caste oppression affects Dalit women differently.

UPSC 2014 Examine the scope and limitations of women’s movements in India.

32 Labour & LGBTQ+ Movements

Labour movement

Origins: textile and jute factories (1850s), railway expansion, visible labour problems. First Labour Commission, Bombay (1875, led by **Sorabjee Shapurji Bengalee**); Factories Act, 1881; the Bombay Mill Workers Association founded by **Narayan Meghaji Lokhande** — India’s first organised labour body. Early character: welfare over rights, not all-India, issues of women and child workers.

Early trade-union era (1918–24): spurred by the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the ILO (India a founder member; **Narayan Malhar Joshi** at

ILO). AITUC; Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (**Anasuyaben Sarabhai**); Madras Labour Association (**Bomanji Pestanji Wadia**). 1925–34: AITUC split into the National Trade Union Federation and the All-India Red Trade Union Congress (led by **S. V. Deshpande** and **Bhalchandra Trimbak Ranadive**); **Varahagiri Venkata Giri** led the Congress-linked NTUF. Laws: Trade Union Act, 1926; Trade Disputes Act, 1929; Bombay Industrial Relations Act, 1946. The Great Bombay Textile Strike (1982) briefly reunited unions; after liberalisation, disorganised labour drew less support. Present central unions: AITUC, INTUC, BMS, CITU.

LGBTQ+ movement

A rights movement against prejudice, legal discrimination, stigma and denial of equal citizenship — a demand for justice, equality, dignity, autonomy and recognition; a democratic state must protect minorities. Issues: Section 377 IPC, religious opposition, the “elitist” charge, invisibility. Milestones: Naz Foundation judgment (2009), Navtej Johar judgment (2018), Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, and the same-sex marriage / Special Marriage Act debate — the intersection of civil liberties, identity politics and constitutional morality (“justice delayed is justice denied”).

33 Contribution, Influence & Why It Matters

Domain	What movements did
Democratic deepening	Widened participation, brought marginal groups into politics, built rights consciousness, held policymakers accountable
Constitutionalism	Made the Constitution a living document, expanded Article 21, used PIL, built rights-based public discourse
Social justice	Challenged caste, patriarchy and class exploitation; defended tribal and forest rights
Environmental governance	Shaped forest, wildlife, pollution and biodiversity law; made development accountable to ecology and livelihood
Gender justice	Moved women's issues from social reform to structural transformation; challenged violence and exclusion
Human rights	Exposed state violence, challenged preventive detention, expanded rights to livelihood, health, education, information and environment

They connect with liberalism, Marxism, feminism, post-colonial theory, Gandhian civil disobedience, environmental justice, pluralism and participatory democracy. **Conclusion:** social movements arise when formal institutions fail to answer social suffering, ecological damage, caste humiliation, gender inequality, labour exploitation or state excess. Their record is mixed — some deepen rights, some stay local, some are absorbed, some turn into counter-movements defending hierarchy. Their real importance is the capacity to convert private suffering into public issue, social grievance into constitutional claim, and marginal voice into democratic pressure — the living relationship between state, society, Constitution, identity, development and justice.

34 Power Quotes

“A series of contentious performances, displays, and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others.” — **Charles Tilly**

“Ecology is economy.” — **Chipko slogan**

Indian environmentalism is the “Environmentalism of the poor.” — **Ramachandra Guha**

“The only nation where the underprivileged segment's participation has surpassed the wealthy segment's is India.” — **Yogendra Yadav**

“Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy ... liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life.” — **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar**

#MeToo is “eroding the two biggest barriers to ending sexual harassment in law and in life: the disbelief and trivializing dehumanization of its victims.” — **Catharine A. MacKinnon**

“Polluted skies, dead rivers, disappearing forests, falling water tables ... is what we see” — India a “Basket case of all sorts of environmental tragedies.” — **Ramachandra Guha**

35 Scholar Index

Bina Agarwal · Anil Agarwal · Salim Ali · B. R. Ambedkar · S. Anandhi · Ashoka · Sunderlal Bahuguna · Bajwa & Bains · Jayanta Bandyopadhyay · Upendra Baxi · Ulrich Beck · Sorabjee Bengalee · P. N. Bhagwati · Rajeev Bhargava · Chandi Prasad Bhatt · Ela Bhatt · Herbert Blumer · Robert Bullard · Burke Langone · Manuel Castells · Uma Chakravarti · Bipan Chandra · Partha Chatterjee · Raghavendra Chattopadhyay · Jean Cohen · Robert Dahl · Angela Davis · James C. Davies · Neera Desai · S. V. Deshpande · Satish Deshpande · Gabriele Dietrich · Jean Dreze · Esther Duflo · Nilanjan Dutta · O. P. Dwivedi · Verrier Elwin · Shulamith Firestone · Geraldine Forbes · Andre Gunder Frank · Nancy Fraser · Marta Fuentes · Madhav Gadgil · Mahatma Gandhi · Gaura Devi · Anthony Giddens · V. V. Giri · Ramachandra Guha · Gopal Guru · Narayana Guru · Ted Robert Gurr · Jurgen Habermas · Nandita Haksar · Stuart Hall · Zoya Hasan · Rudolf Heberle · Panduranga Hegde · Nagesh Hegde · Samuel Huntington · Christophe Jaffrelot · Devaki Jain · Robin Jeffrey · Narayan Malhar Joshi · Kautilya · Laura Keenan · Atul Kohli · Ashish Kothari · Rajni Kothari · Smitu Kothari · Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner · J. C. Kumarappa · Amitabh Kundu · K. Lalitha · John Locke · Narayan Meghaji Lokhande · Doug McAdam · John D. McCarthy · Catharine A. MacKinnon · Aparna Mahanta · Manu · Joan Martinez-Alier · Vina Mazumdar · Pratap Bhanu Mehta · Alberto Melucci · Nivedita Menon · Kate Millett · Chandra Talpade Mohanty · Sarojini Naidu · Sunita Narain · Jayaprakash Narayan · Jawaharlal Nehru · Gail Omvedt · Sudha Pai · Rohini Pande · Shekhar Pathak · Jyotiba Phule · Arvind Rajagopal · B. T. Ranadive · Arundhati Roy · Raja Ram Mohan Roy · Sarojini Sahoo · S. N. Sahu · Abhay

36 How UPSC Asks It

Environment — 6 PYQs

Question — as asked in the paper	Year · Marks
Critically examine the provisions made in the Constitution for the protection of Environment.	2016 · 15m
Critically analyse the environmentalist movement in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu.	2018 · 15m
Write a short note on the significance of the Chipko Movement.	2019 · 10m
Compare and contrast the Chipko Movement with Narmada Bachao Andolan.	2013 · 10m
Comment on the environmentalism of the poor.	2023 · 10m
Discuss the role of environmental movements in shaping the environmental governance in India.	2024 · 20m

Civil Liberties, Human Rights & the Dalit Movement — 3 PYQs

Question — as asked in the paper	Year · Marks
Examine the nature of the civil liberty movement in India.	2020 · 15m
The dilemmas of the human rights movements in India.	2014 · 10m
Dr. Ambedkar's clarion call, "Educate, Agitate and Organize", strategizes the Dalit movement towards achieving civil liberty. Discuss.	2023 · 15m

Women's Movement — 3 PYQs

Question — as asked in the paper	Year · Marks
Women empowerment in India and its impact on democracy.	2000 · 10m
The Concept of Women Empowerment.	2006 · 10m
Comment on women's role in anti-arrack movement.	2024 · 10m

37 Today's Practice — write before the evening

1. Discuss the role of environmental movements in shaping the environmental governance in India. **UPSC 2024 · 20m**
2. Examine the nature of the civil liberty movement in India. **UPSC 2020 · 15m**
3. Dr. Ambedkar's clarion call, "Educate, Agitate and Organize", strategizes the Dalit movement towards achieving civil liberty. Discuss. **UPSC 2023 · 15m**
4. Comment on women's role in anti-arrack movement. **UPSC 2024 · 10m**

Model answers drop tonight on the Telegram channel — [@psirbyamitpratap](#). Don't break the chain.

Paper I closes here. See you tomorrow with Day 27 — Comparative Politics: Nature & Approaches.