

### COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR AND PROTESTS

#### *We learn about the following in this chapter:*

- Mobs – meaning, nature and effects.
- riots – meaning, nature and effects.
- different forms of collective behavior.
- Women’s Self-Help Groups.

Man is a social animal, and hence always lives in groups, communities and societies. When he is a member of a group, he behaves in a manner totally different from the way he behaves when he is alone. This kind of behavior is called ‘collective behaviour’. Collective behavior is an integral part of our social life.

The thoughts, feelings and behavior of a large number of disorganized people coming together accidentally constitute collective behaviour. Human behaviour coming under the scope of collective behavior includes mobs, rumours, propaganda, public opinion, revolution, social movements etc. Some of such behavioral patterns are described underneath:

**Mobs:** ‘Assembly of people around a common interest without any expectation or planning is called a mob’. The mob is a temporary assembly of people which responds to a particular provocation. For ex: a group of people assembled near a theatre to buy tickets, an assembly of people around an accident scene. etc..

Mob is a temporary assembly of people. In this, people assemble at a specific place. Members of a mob are influenced very easily by mutual feelings, opinions and acts. There is a possibility of display of suppressed feelings. Sometimes such displays assume violent form.

#### **Influence of mob**

Uncontrolled acts of the members of a mob often indicate the shortcomings of the society. Sometimes, they express the frustration

towards the working of social organizations. In addition, they represent the people's dissatisfaction about the government's projects, attitude and specific programs.

When the collective behavior goes to an extreme, it becomes necessary to use police force, security forces, military help etc.

**Riots:** Riots are another type of mob behavior. Violent and destructive nature of mob behavior is called riot. When riots become uncontrollable and harmful, they lead to destruction.

**Nature of Riots :** The minimum level of unity seen in a mob is not visible in a riot. Those involved in riots go on destroying everything in their way. Creation of chaos is the intention of rioters. Sometimes, these riots lead to large scale loss of property and lives. The people engaged in riots do not have any particular aim or cause for the destruction they cause. Riots have become serious challenges for law and order.

Communal clashes, communal fights, group clashes are the some examples of riots. Riots occur more in towns and cities. Provoking circumstances, individuals' uncontrolled behavior, uncivilized behavior, criminal intent of people, riotous mindset are the main causes for riots.

Riots do not continue for a long time. They have to end at a particular stage. Riots can be controlled by the presence of mind of the officials, by police and security forces and law.

### **Collective behavior and movements:**

When collective behavior is organized and directed towards a specific goal, and aims to bring about social change, it is called a Movement. Many such movements have taken place in India. Environmental movements can be given as an example for this.

The soil, air, water and biosphere around us getting polluted with toxins and chemicals is called environmental pollution.

With the increase in human population, there is a significant change in lifestyle also. As a result of this, the pressure on the environment where human beings are living is progressively increasing. Developed and developing nations exploit the natural resources in an aggressive manner. Developed nations are destroying the environment for the purpose of their luxurious life. Many nations in the world are exerting enormous pressure on the environment due to the problems faced by increase in the human population. In addition, the unbridled growth of cities, proliferation of industries, technological progress, expansion of transport system etc. are destroying the forests and polluting the environment. Consequently, pollution is posing a serious problem.

Many intellectuals, environmentalists and others have expressed their apprehensions about the environmental pollution. People have also realized the threat and are carrying out collective protests demanding environmental protection. Let us learn in brief about a few such important agitations.

### 1. Chipko movement:

The government gave permission to chop down certain trees in Tehri Garhwal district of Uttar Pradesh. The people there realized that there will be loss of trees, and their environment will be destroyed. So they hugged the trees and halted their destruction. This movement took place in 1973 under the leadership of Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna and Shri Chandiprasad Bhatt. As a result, the permission given to chop down the trees was withdrawn.



## **2. Appiko movement:**

In 1983, the farmers of Salyani village in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka began the 'Appiko' movement. When the contractors came to cut down trees in Kelase forest, in order to stop them, the farmers hugged the trees and protested. The purpose of the farmers' protest was to stop smuggling of trees, and develop awareness among the common people about the importance of growing trees and the importance of environment.

## **3. Narmada movement:**

An agitation was launched against the construction of a dam across the Narmada river under Sardar Sarovar Project in Gujarat. The leaders of this movement were environmental activists Medha Patkar and Baba Amte who felt that with the construction of the dam, there would be large scale destruction of forests, damage to the environment and threat to many animal species.

## **4. Silent Valley movement:**

The environment and many animal species came under threat when a dam was planned to be constructed in the Silent Valley in Palghat taluk of Kerala. In order to stop the construction, the Kerala Sahitya Parishad and wild-life enthusiasts agitated against it. This movement was successful in protecting many forms of flora and fauna.

## **5. Movement against MRPL:**

Environmentalists protested against the 'Mangalore Refineries and Petrochemicals Limited' (MRPL) in Mangalore in Karnataka when they realized that the chemicals fumes from the proposed oil refinery would destroy the environment.

## **6. Agitation against Kaiga:**

Dr. Shivaram Karanth and other intellectuals carried out a movement against the Nuclear Power Generation Center proposed to be set up in Kaiga in Karnataka. This agitation was carried out because the agitators felt that the nuclear power generation center

would cause loss of forest cover, and the radiation from the center would pollute the environment, thus endangering the survival of various animal species of the area.

Along with carrying out agitations, it becomes necessary to create public awareness about the various issues. People have to be made to understand that it is their prime duty to protect their environment and nurture it. Only then will each citizen work towards protecting the environment selflessly. There is a need to create awareness among the people regarding effective programmes for environmental protection and their implementation.

### **Women's Self Help Groups**

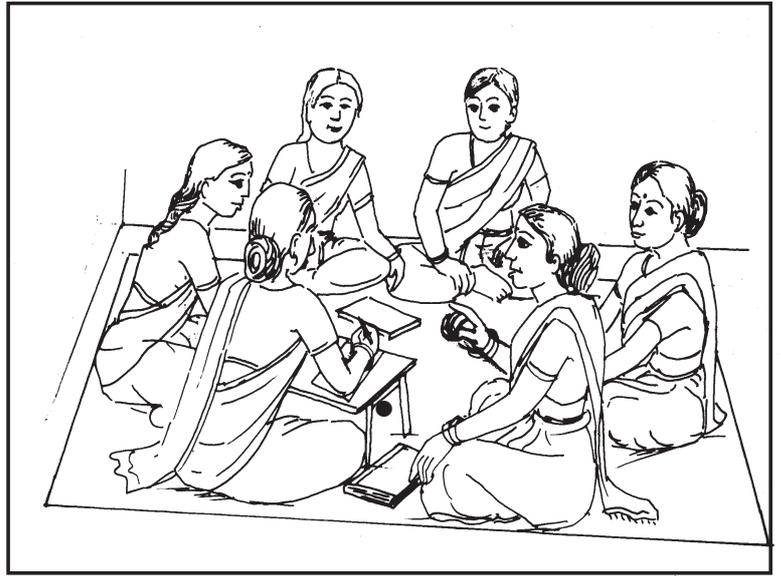
Besides movements, there are self-help groups based on trust and co-operation. These are exceptional kinds of collective behavior. The concept of women's self help group is derived from self-awareness, self-motivation and mutual trust to fulfil the economic and social necessities by their own efforts and co-operation. It consists of ten to twenty local women members. This can be considered as a parallel platform to that of men to provide women right opportunity, responsibility and power.

Women's self-help groups are very important in empowering the women socially. These groups empower the women financially too. The government of India is also encouraging women to participate actively in these groups. Self help groups are modern forms of government's commercial organization. By establishing these self-help groups in rural areas, it is possible to provide women micro-finance in a major way and also help them in social and economic development.

These self-help groups, by increasing educational awareness, have helped women to lead an independent life. They help the women to face the atrocities heaped on them effectively. They also enable women to get their fundamental human rights independently. These sensitive groups operate keeping in mind women's democratic rights, power and self-respect. They strive to

provide women opportunities to participate in all developmental programs. In addition, they enable women to get suitable representation in developmental projects.

Self-help groups, in addition to managing the social developmental works, also enable women to avoid confrontations by collective responsibility. In this way, they will be able to benefit from various programmes of the government.



**Women self help groups**

**Do you know this :**

*Karnataka's Women Empowerment Programme is a good example of the effort to make women live independently. Under the name of women empowerment programme, Karnataka's women self-help groups are becoming very popular throughout the state. An example of this is worth mentioning here.*

**Ex:** 'Siri' Rural Industry, being run by the Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, provides opportunity for manufacturing high value products. It is also successful in instilling hope in women to market these products.

**EXERCISES**

**I Fill in the blanks with suitable words:**

1. Chipko movement took place in \_\_\_\_\_ State.
2. The leader of the Narmada agitation is \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Dr. Shivaram Karanth was agitate the \_\_\_\_\_ Nuclear power station.

## **II Answer the following in one sentence each:**

1. What is 'Collective behaviour'?
2. Who is the leader of 'Chipko' movement?
3. What is self-help group?

## **III Answer the following in two or three sentences after discussing them in groups:**

1. What are the examples of collective behavior?
2. What is a 'mob'? Give examples.
3. Describe the nature of a mob.
4. Describe the meaning and nature of environmental pollution.
5. Explain the importance of women's self-help groups.

## **IV Activity:**

1. Visit women's organizations and self-help groups in your Place. Collect their programmes with objecties.
2. Learn from the members how the women's organizations and self-help groups have enabled economic development of women.

## **V Project:**

Collect the information and prepare the album about environmental movements in Karnataka.

