

## Chapter- 5

# Popular Struggle and Movement

### STUDY NOTES

#### Popular struggles in Nepal and Bolivia

In Chapter 1 of Class 9 Political Science, you have studied the story of the triumph of democracy in Poland. The story reminds you of the role of the people in making Poland a democratic country. Here are 2 more stories through which you get to know how power is exercised in a democracy.

#### Movement for Democracy in Nepal

Nepal witnessed a popular movement in April 2006, which was aimed at regaining popular control over the government from the king. All the major political parties in the parliament formed a Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and called for a four-day strike in Kathmandu. They demanded;

- a. Restoration of parliament
- b. Power to an all-party government
- c. A new constituent assembly

On 24 April 2006, the king was forced to accept all the three demands. In 2008, the kingship was abolished and Nepal became a federal democratic republic. In 2015, it adopted a new constitution. The struggle of the Nepali people is a source of inspiration to democrats all over the world.

#### Democratic Politics Bolivia's Water War

People's successful struggle against the privatisation of water in Bolivia shows that struggles are necessary for the working of democracy.

#### Democracy and Popular Struggles

The stories of Nepal and Bolivia were different from each other. The movement in Nepal was to establish democracy, while the struggle in Bolivia involved claims on an elected, democratic government. Both these struggles show their impact at different levels. Despite these differences, both instances involved critical role of political organisations.

Here are some points which demonstrate how democracy has evolved all over the world:

1. Democracy evolves through popular struggles.
2. Democratic conflict is resolved through mass mobilisation. Sometimes, conflict is resolved by using the existing institutions like the parliament or the judiciary.
3. The conflicts and mobilisations are based on new political organisations, which include political parties, pressure groups and movement groups.

### Mobilisation and Organisations

In a democracy, different kinds of organisations work behind any big struggle. These organisations play their role in two ways.

1. Direct participation in competitive politics which is done by creating parties, contesting elections and forming governments. However, every citizen does not participate so directly, other than through voting.
2. There are many indirect ways in which people can get governments to listen to their demands or their points of view. This is done by forming an organisation and undertaking activities to promote the interests or viewpoints of people. Such groups are known as “**interest groups or pressure groups**”.

### Pressure Groups and Movements

**Pressure groups** are organisations that attempt to influence government policies. These organisations are formed when people with common occupation, interest, aspirations or opinions come together to achieve a common objective.

A **Movement** attempts to influence politics rather than directly taking part in electoral competition. It's a small organisation which depends on spontaneous mass participation of people than an interest group.

**Eg:** Narmada Bachao Andolan, Movement for Right to Information, Anti-liquor Movement, Women's Movement, Environmental Movement.

### Sectional Interest Groups and Public Interest Groups

Sectional Interest Groups	Public Interest Group
They aim to promote the interests of a particular section or group of society.	They aim to help groups other than their own members.
They represent a section of society. Eg: Trade unions, business associations and professional (lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.)	They are also called promotional groups.
Their principal concern is the betterment and well-being of their members, not society in general.	They aim to help groups other than their own members.
The members of the organisation may not benefit from the cause that the organisation represents. <b>Eg:</b> Bolivian organisation, FEDECOR.	In some instances, the members of a public interest group may undertake activity that benefits them as well as others too. <b>Eg:</b> BAMCEF (Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation)

How do Pressure Group and Movements influence politics?

They exert influence on politics in a variety of ways:

1. They try to gain public support and sympathy for their goals and their activities by carrying out information campaigns, organising meetings, filing petitions, etc.
2. They often organise protest activities like strikes or disrupting government programmes.
3. Some persons from pressure groups or movement groups may participate in official bodies and committees that offer advice to the government.

The relationship between political parties and pressure groups can take different forms. Some direct and indirect ways are:

1. In some cases, the pressure groups are either formed or led by the leaders of political parties or act as extended arms of political parties. **For example,**

most trade unions and students' organisations in India are either established by or affiliated to one or the other major political parties.

2. Sometimes political parties grow out of movements.

**For example**, when the Assam movement led by students against the 'foreigners' came to an end, it led to the formation of the Asom Gana Parishad.

3. In most cases, the relationship between parties and interest or movement groups is not so direct. In this case also, the dialogue and negotiation take place as most of the new leaders of political parties come from interest or movement groups.

Is Pressure Group and Movements influence healthy?

Pressure groups and Movements have strengthened democracy. Governments can often come under undue pressure from a small group of rich and powerful people. Public interest groups and Movements perform a useful role in countering this undue influence and reminding the government of the needs and concerns of ordinary citizens. Sectional interest groups also play a valuable role where different groups function actively, no one single group can achieve dominance over society. Thus, the government gets to hear about what different sections of the population want.

