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Q6(b)

What is new in 'new social movement '? Elaborate your answer with special reference to India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 1 · 20 marks · Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx

Sociological Thinkers: Karl Marx - Historical materialism, mode of production, alienation, class struggle; Emile Durkheim - Division of labour, social fact, suicide, religion and society; Max Weber - Social action, ideal types, authority, bureaucracy, protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism; Talcott Parsons - Social system, pattern variables; Robert K. Merton - Latent and manifest functions, conformity and deviance, reference groups; Mead - Self and identity.

Core demand of the question

- What is new in 'new social movements'? Elaborate your answer with special reference to India
- Keep the elaboration within a 20-mark length

Revision summary

New social movements organise identity, ecology, gender, and everyday life beside the wage.

Touraine, **Melucci**, and Offe named the European type.

- **India:** Chipko, Narmada, women's and Dalit movements.

Recognition and redistribution often travel together.

Repertoires of strike and march are not abandoned.

Introduction

New social movements are those that, from the late twentieth century, organised around identity, ecology, gender, and peace as much as around the wage. What is new is not the fact of protest. It is the claim, the base, and often the style.

Body

Against the old labour-party model

- Alain **Touraine** and Alberto **Melucci** stressed identity, everyday life, and cultural codes.
- Claus Offe noted a shift from distribution to grammar of forms of life, with middle-class and educated cores.
- They are not always "post-material" in poor societies; ecology and displacement are material.

What is new

- **Bases beyond the industrial workplace:** students, women, Adivasis, urban neighbourhoods.
- Issues of body, river, language, and dignity, not only wage and hours.
- Network forms, media, and NGOs beside the classic union and party.
- **Global framing:** environment and human rights talk.

Indian reference

- Chipko and later **Narmada Bachao Andolan** tied ecology to livelihood and displacement.
- Women's movements after the 1970s raised dowry, work, and law, a gendered public that the old left had underplayed.
- Dalit, Adivasi, and sexuality movements claim recognition as well as redistribution, which Nancy **Fraser's** pair helps name.
- Farmers' and informal workers' protests show that "new" and "old" often mix.

What is not new

- Charles Tilly's repertoire still includes strike, march, and petition.
- Caste associations and religious mobilisations use new media for old closures.

Caution

- "New" can be a North-Atlantic periodisation. Indian movements long mixed land, faith, and community.

Flow diagram

Labour party wage -> Indian mix
Identity ecology gender -> Indian mix
Identity ecology gender -> Networks media NGO
Indian mix -> Recognition and redistribution

Conclusion

What is new is the centrality of identity, ecology, gender, and networked form beside the wage. In India, Chipko, Narmada, women's and Dalit movements illustrate that mix. The wage and the party have not vanished; the agenda has widened.

Facts & figures

Touraine

Movements as struggles over historicity and cultural orientation.

Melucci

Collective identity and latent networks as the 'new' organisational fact.

Narmada Bachao Andolan

Displacement and river as a landmark Indian movement beyond the factory.

Fraser

Recognition and redistribution as two dimensions of justice claims.