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Q5(b)

Are social movements primordial in means and progressive in agenda? Explain

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Politics and Society

Politics and Society: Sociological theories of power; Power elite, bureaucracy, pressure groups, and political parties; Nation, state, citizenship, democracy, civil society, ideology; Protest, agitation, social movements, collective action, revolution.

Core demand of the question

- Are social movements primordial in means and progressive in agenda? Explain
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

The claim pairs old means with progressive ends.

Tilly shows repertoires stick; some Indian movements fit.

Digital **PIL** and majoritarian restoration break the pair.

Touraine already mixed cultural means and new agendas.

Treat means and agenda as independent variables.

Introduction

- **The formula splits means and ends:** old repertoires of march, shrine, and kinship, with new rights talk. Some movements fit. Many do not. Means can be networked and new; agendas can restore hierarchy.

Body

When the formula fits

- **Charles Tilly's repertoire is sticky:** petition, strike, fast, and pilgrimage recur.
- **Chipko** and some temple-entry or shrine-based mobilisations used familiar sacred and village means for livelihood or dignity claims.
- Identity movements may use caste association form for reservation, a modern state agenda.

When it fails

- Progressive means can be digital campaigns and **PIL**, not primordial at all.
- Agendas may be majoritarian restoration, not emancipation.
- Alain **Touraine's** new social movements already mixed cultural means and post-wage agendas.
- Farmers' tractor marches were industrial means with mixed agrarian agendas.

Explanation

- Means and agendas vary independently. Primordial and progressive are not a necessary pair.

Flow diagram

Means old or new -> Independent mix

Agenda restore or reform -> Independent mix

Primordial means progressive agenda -> Only some cases

Conclusion

Some Indian movements wrap new claims in old ritual means. The generalisation is false. Means can be modern and agendas conservative, or the reverse. Analyse each movement's repertoire and aim.

Facts & figures

Tilly

Repertoires of contention: historically learned means that recur.

Chipko

Familiar village-forest means with a livelihood and ecology agenda.

PIL

A modern legal means that is not primordial.

Touraine

Movements as struggles over cultural orientation, not only over wages.

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