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Q7(b)

Discuss the main features of farmers' movements in independent India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Social Movements in Modern India

Social Movements in Modern India: Peasants and farmers movements; Women's movement; Backward classes and Dalit movement; Environmental movements; Ethnicity and Identity movements.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the main features of farmers' movements in independent India
- Cover class, region, and the shift after the Green Revolution

Revision summary

Early movements still carried land-to-the-tiller and tenancy demands.

After the Green Revolution, price, power, and credit dominated.

Leadership often came from commercially strong, dominant-caste farmers.

Labour and women were weakly represented in the agenda.

The state market, not the village landlord alone, became the opponent.

Introduction

Farmers' movements in independent India have been regionally uneven, often led by proprietary cultivators, and aimed at prices, credit, and subsidy more than at land-to-the-tiller after the first reform wave.

Body**Early features**

- Telangana's end and Tebhaga's memory sat beside official land reform. A. R. Desai read incomplete reform as the soil of later conflict.
- Left peasant unions still spoke of landlord and labour. That language thinned in many Green Revolution belts.

New farmers' movements

- Sharad Joshi, Tikait, and Punjab unions featured commercially oriented farmers, tractor capital, and **Bharat versus India** talk.
- Demands centred on output prices, power, and loan waiver, not on redistributing the dominant caste's land that Srinivas mapped.
- Methods were roadblocks, rallies, and party bargaining, more than armed struggle.

Inclusions and exclusions

- Landless Dalit labour and women were often foot soldiers, not the demand-setters.

- 2020-21 farm laws protests showed federal marketing as a new feature, still with a proprietary core.

Flow diagram

Land reform era -> Tenancy landlord

Green Revolution -> Price subsidy

Price subsidy -> Proprietary unions

Conclusion

Independent India's farmer movements shifted from tenancy-land struggles toward price-and-state bargaining by a thickened rich-peasant class. Labour remains the missing subject in much of this politics.

Facts & figures

Tebhaga / Telangana

Late-colonial and early-independence peasant struggles over share and land.

Shetkari Sanghatana

Maharashtra's new farmers' movement around remunerative prices.

BKU

North Indian union politics of proprietary cultivators.

Bharat versus India

The slogan that framed farmers against an urban-biased state.

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