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Q8(a)

Bring out the various issues involved in Dalit movements in India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 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

- Bring out the various issues involved in Dalit movements in India

Revision summary

Core issues are untouchability, land-labour and representation.

BAMCEF and **BSP** show employee and electoral paths.

Internal issues are sub-caste, class split and gender.

Strategy debates include alliance, conversion and cultural assertion.

Hinduisation as integration is refused; constitutional dignity is claimed.

Introduction

Dalit movements fight graded inequality that **Ambedkar** named as caste, not as a side custom. Their issues are unity, strategy, gender, class, and relation to the state, as well as the older issues of land, honour, and untouchability.

Body**Core issues of the struggle**

- Untouchability in ritual, work, and space, including manual scavenging and atrocity, remains the moral centre.
- **Land and labour:** incomplete agrarian transformation left Dalits as a labour class under dominant castes, which Desai's frame and Srinivas's village power both illuminate.
- **Representation:** reservation, parties, and **BAMCEF**-type employee unions convert exclusion into a claim on the state. **BSP** showed the electoral path and its limits when it must bargain with other blocs.

Issues inside the movement

- **Unity versus sub-caste:** scheduled groups are not one jati; movements split on who owns the symbol of **Ambedkar**.
- **Class:** a small educated elite and a large informal labour mass do not share one daily enemy.
- **Gender:** Dalit women face caste and patriarchy together; Seed-and-Earth honour in dominant groups and silence inside the movement are both issues.
- **Religion:** conversion, Hindu inclusion, and Buddhist Ambedkarite paths compete as strategies of dignity.

Strategy debates

- Constitutionalism versus street revolt; independent party versus alliance; cultural assertion versus material land struggle.
- Yogendra Singh's modernization language can absorb Dalits as a mobile tradition. Movements often refuse that absorption as Hinduisation, which Ghurye once recommended for tribes and which Dalit politics rejects for itself.

Contemporary issues

- Campus and digital hate, plus the informal sector's caste job queues.
- **Relation to OBC and minority blocs:** Bahujan unity is a project, not a fact.

Flow diagram

Dalit movements -> Untouchability land honour

Dalit movements -> Unity gender class

Dalit movements -> Party union conversion

Party union conversion -> State reservation BSP

Conclusion

Dalit movements in India issue from untouchability, landless labour, and honour. Their internal issues are unity, gender, class, and strategy toward the state. The movement is a long democratic revolution, not a single party story.

Facts & figures

Ambedkar

Annihilation of caste, constitutional rights, and a political community of the excluded.

BAMCEF

Organisation of backward and minority employees that built a national Dalit professional voice.

BSP

Electoral vehicle that proved Dalit-Bahujan numbers could capture state power, then faced alliance arithmetic.

Atrocity and scavenging

Continuing material issues that keep the movement from becoming only a middle-class identity.