

CUET · SOCIOLOGY · CLASS XII · CODE 326

# Social Movements

CUET unit: Social Change and Development in India — Social Movements

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## Snapshot

- Chapter 8 of **Social Change and Development in India** maps the meaning, features, types and major instances of social movements that have shaped modern India.
- It distinguishes social change (continuous, diffuse) from social movements (organised, goal-directed collective action) and contrasts "old" class-based movements with "new" identity/quality-of-life movements.
- It covers ecological (Chipko), class-based (peasant, workers), caste-based (Dalit, Backward Classes), tribal (Jharkhand, North-East) and women's movements in India.
- CUET regularly tests the typology (reformist/redemptive/revolutionary), key dates (Tebhaga, Telangana, AITUC, AIWC), and named examples (Bardoli, Champaran, Chipko, Birsa Munda).
- High-yield NTA traps cluster around dates, founders and the old-vs-new distinction.

## Detailed Notes

### 2.1 Core concepts

A **social movement** is defined as **sustained collective action over time** that is usually directed against the state, has some degree of leadership and structure, and is held together by shared objectives and ideology (NCERT §8.1, p. 111). "Spontaneous, disorganised protest cannot be called a social movement" — a riot, a crowd reaction, or a momentary outburst lacks the duration, organisation, and shared programme that define a social movement. **Counter movements** arise in defence of the status quo against a reformist or transformatory movement — the **Dharma Sabha** against the anti-sati campaign, the opposition to widow remarriage, and the resistance to extensions of reservation are NCERT's examples (NCERT §8.1, p. 111). Movements rely on a "repertoire" of actions: **mobilising meetings, lobbying with government and media, and distinct modes of protest** — candle processions, black-cloth campaigns, street theatre, songs. Gandhi added to this repertoire **ahimsa, satyagraha, khadi, the charkha, the Dandi salt march, and picketing** (NCERT §8.1, p. 112; Box 8.2).

There is a careful distinction between **social change and social movements**. Social change is continuous and broad — sanskritisation, westernisation, the spread of

literacy, the demographic transition are all examples of social change. Social movements, by contrast, are **directed at specific goals through sustained, organised effort** — the 19th-century reform movements against sati and child marriage are textbook examples. Sociology has tracked movements since its origin: the French Revolution and the food riots of industrial Britain were the founding objects of sociological analysis. **Emile Durkheim** saw movements as threats to social integration and as forces tending towards disorder; scholars influenced by **Karl Marx** — notably the historian **E.P. Thompson** — argued instead that the "crowd" had a **moral economy** of right and wrong, and that what looked like irrational riot was often disciplined moral protest (NCERT §8.2, p. 113).

A **three-fold typology** of social movements: (i) **redemptive (transformatory)** — movements that aim to change the personal consciousness and actions of their members — **Narayana Guru's** reform among the Ezhavas in Kerala is the textbook example; (ii) **reformist** — movements that seek gradual, incremental change in existing institutions — the **1960s linguistic reorganisation of states** and the **Right to Information** campaign are cited; (iii) **revolutionary** — movements that seek radical transformation, often by capturing state power — the **Bolshevik Revolution** and the **Naxalite movement** are the examples (NCERT §8.3, p. 114). The same event may be classified differently by different actors — **1857** was a "mutiny" or "rebellion" for the British but the **"first war of Independence"** for Indian nationalists (NCERT §8.3, p. 114).

The **old vs new social movements** distinction (Box 8.4) is another perennial CUET hook. **Old social movements** worked within political parties (the **Indian National Congress** led the national movement; the **CPC** led the Chinese Revolution) and sought reorganisation of power — they were class-based and party-led. **New social movements** focus on quality-of-life issues (clean environment, gender justice, identity recognition), cut across class lines, and are often international in scope — the **World Social Forum**, the anti-WTO Seattle protests, and the global environmental movement are cited (NCERT §8.3, pp. 114–115). **Rajni Kothari** attributes the surge of Indian movements in the 1970s to dissatisfaction with parliamentary democracy and the capture of state institutions by elites (NCERT §8.3, p. 115).

**Ecological movements (§8.4)** focus on the **Chipko Movement** in the Himalayan foothills, where villagers — many of them women — hugged oak and rhododendron trees to stop contractor felling. The movement linked **subsistence** (firewood, fodder), **ecological sustainability** (the link between deforestation and the floods/landslides of the 1970 Alaknanda flood), and **political representation** against a distant plains-based government. **Gaura Devi of the Reni village Mahila Mandal** led one of the famous actions (NCERT §8.4, pp. 116–117; Box 8.3). **Namami Gange** and **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** as 2014-onward government ecological initiatives (NCERT §8.4, p. 117).

**Peasant movements (§8.5)** cover the Bengal **Indigo revolt (1859–62)**, the **Deccan riots (1857)**, and Gandhian-era struggles: **Champaran Satyagraha (1917–18)** against indigo planters in Bihar; **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928, Surat)** as a no-tax

campaign. Organisationally, the **Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha** was formed in 1929 and the **All India Kisan Sabha** in 1936. The two classical cases at Independence are **Tebhaga (1946–47)** — Bengal sharecroppers' demand for a two-thirds share of produce, backed by the Kisan Sabha and the CPI — and **Telangana (1946–51)** — a peasant struggle against feudal conditions in princely Hyderabad, led by the CPI (NCERT §8.5, p. 118). **New farmers' movements** of the 1970s, especially in **Punjab and Tamil Nadu**, were regionally organised, non-party, market-involved farmer bodies that were anti-state and anti-urban; they demanded remunerative prices, lower input costs, and loan waivers, and used road/rail blockades and bans on politicians entering villages (NCERT §8.5, pp. 118–119).

**Workers' movements (§ 8.5):** Factory production began in India in the 1860s in port towns — **Calcutta, Bombay**, later **Madras**; tea plantations in Assam began in 1839. The **first trade union** was founded in **April 1918 in Madras by B.P. Wadia** (a member of the Theosophical Society). The same year, **Gandhi founded the Textile Labour Association (TLA)** in Ahmedabad. The **All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was formed in Bombay in 1920**. The Congress-affiliated **Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) was formed in May 1947**. The **1974 railway workers' strike** is cited as a major event (NCERT §8.5, pp. 119–121).

**Caste-based movements (§ 8.6).** The word "**Dalit**" in its modern sense was first used in Marathi by the **neo-Buddhist followers of B.R. Ambedkar in the early 1970s**; the term carries a denial of pollution, karma and justified caste hierarchy. Major movements include the **Satnami** (Chhattisgarh Chamars), **Adi Dharma** (Punjab), **Mahar** (Maharashtra), the **Jatav** mobilisation in Agra, and the **Anti-Brahman movement** in south India. Sociologists classify Dalit movements as showing all three types simultaneously — reformative, redemptive and revolutionary (Box 8.7, p. 122).

**Backward Classes movements** have a long history — Madras 1872, Mysore 1918, Bombay 1925; by 1954, 88 such organisations existed. In **2019** the Government of India introduced **10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** among upper castes (NCERT §8.6, pp. 122–123; Box 8.8).

**Tribal movements (§ 8.7).** The "tribal belt" includes the **Santhals, Hos, Oraons, and Mundas** of Chota Nagpur and the Santhal Parganas — the present-day **Jharkhand** region. **Birsa Munda** led an uprising against the British. **Jharkhand was carved out of south Bihar in 2000**. Adivasis resented the **dikus** — migrant traders and moneylenders who settled in adivasi areas and grabbed wealth. Issues included land acquisition for irrigation and firing ranges, survey and settlement, loan collection, and the nationalisation of forest produce. **North-East tribal movements** have moved from secessionism to **autonomy within the Constitution** (Nongbri 2003) (NCERT §8.7, pp. 123–124).

**Women's movement (§ 8.8).** Early 20th-century bodies included the **Women's India Association (WIA) 1917**, the **National Council for Women in India (NCWI) 1925**, and the **All India Women's Conference (AIWC) 1926**. Women participated in the **Tebhaga, Telangana and Warli** revolts. A "second phase" of the women's movement

began in the **mid-1970s** focusing on violence against women, dowry, sexual harassment, land rights, and employment. **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana** is a Government of India effort towards a gender-just society (NCERT §8.8, pp. 125–126).

## 2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Social movement	Sustained collective action with organisation, leadership, shared ideology, aimed at changing/preventing change on a public issue	111
Counter movement	Movement that arises in defence of the status quo against a reform movement (e.g., Dharma Sabha)	111
Redemptive movement	Movement aiming to change personal consciousness and actions of members (e.g., Narayana Guru among Ezhavas)	114
Reformist movement	Movement seeking change through gradual, incremental steps (e.g., linguistic reorganisation of states; RTI)	114
Revolutionary movement	Movement seeking radical transformation, often via capturing state power (e.g., Bolshevik, Naxalite)	114
Old social movement	Class-based, party-led, focused on reorganisation of power (INC, CPC)	114–115
New social movement	Quality-of-life, identity-based, cuts across class, often international (WSF, anti-WTO)	115
Moral economy	E.P. Thompson's term: the shared understanding of right and wrong that informs the actions of the "crowd"	113
Dalit	Marathi/Hindi term meaning "broken/ground down"; revived by neo-Buddhist Ambedkarites in early 1970s	121
Dikus	Migrant traders and moneylenders who settled in adivasi areas of south Bihar and grabbed wealth	124
Tebhaga movement	1946–47 sharecroppers' struggle in Bengal for two-thirds share of produce	118
Telangana movement	1946–51 peasant struggle against feudalism in princely Hyderabad, led by CPI	118
Bardoli Satyagraha	1928 no-tax campaign in Surat district, Gujarat	118
Champaran Satyagraha	1917–18 Gandhian campaign against indigo planters in Bihar	118
Chipko	Himalayan ecological movement of villagers hugging trees	116
Satyagraha	Gandhian non-violent direct action — major addition to the protest repertoire	112
AITUC	All India Trade Union Congress, founded Bombay 1920	120

Term	Definition	Page
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress, founded by Congress May 1947	120
TLA	Textile Labour Association, founded by Gandhi 1918 in Ahmedabad	120
WIA	Women's India Association, founded 1917	125
NCWI	National Council for Women in India, founded 1925	125
AIWC	All India Women's Conference, founded 1926	125
EWS	10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (upper castes), introduced 2019	123
Repertoire of protest	Set of action forms — meetings, processions, lobbying, satyagraha, candles, songs	112

### 2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- Photograph of Chipko activists at Saklana on World Environment Day, 1986 — note the women hugging trees as central image of the movement (p. 116).
- Photographs of Bombay textile workers' strike 1981–82 and women workers at a Union Demonstration, Arwal, Bihar 1987 — illustrate workers' movement (p. 120).
- Picture of women in Civil Disobedience Movement — example of women's participation in nationalist struggle (p. 125).
- Box 8.1 (Right to Vote / Chartism), Box 8.2 (repertoire of satyagraha), Box 8.3 (Chipko / 1970 Alaknanda flood), Box 8.5 (Naxalbari / Kanu Sanyal), Box 8.6 (Srikakulam Girijans, 1968), Box 8.7 (classifying Dalit movements), Box 8.8 (G.B. Pant on Backward Classes) — high-frequency exam material.
- The typology triangle (p. 114): Redemptive (Narayana Guru) – Reformist (RTI, linguistic reorganisation) – Revolutionary (Bolshevik, Naxalite).
- The old/new movement timeline (pp. 114–115): old movements ← class/party axis; new movements → quality of life / identity axis.
- The Indian labour timeline (pp. 119–120): 1860s factories in port towns → 1918 first trade union (Madras, B.P. Wadia) and TLA (Gandhi) → 1920 AITUC → 1947 INTUC.
- The women's organisations chronology (p. 125): WIA 1917 → NCWI 1925 → AIWC 1926.

### 2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- Tebhaga (1946–47, Bengal, sharecroppers, two-thirds share) vs Telangana (1946–51, Hyderabad, anti-feudal, CPI-led) — students often swap dates and locations.
- AITUC (1920, Bombay, broad-based) vs INTUC (May 1947, Congress) vs first trade union (April 1918, Madras, B.P. Wadia) vs TLA (1918, Gandhi, Ahmedabad textile) — easy to confuse founders.

- "Redemptive" (changes personal consciousness) is often confused with "reformist" (gradual societal change). Narayana Guru = redemptive; RTI/linguistic reorganisation = reformist.
- AIWC (1926), WIA (1917), NCWI (1925) — dates frequently shuffled in distractors.
- Chipko is an ecological movement but it also has economic (subsistence vs profit) and political (hill vs plains) dimensions; do not pick "purely environmental" as the answer.
- The word "Dalit" in its modern sense was revived in the **early 1970s** by neo-Buddhist Ambedkarites — not by Ambedkar himself in the 1940s.
- Jharkhand was created in **2000**, not 1995 or 2001.
- Birsa Munda led an uprising against the **British**, not against post-Independence governments — a common date trap.
- E.P. Thompson is associated with the "moral economy" of the crowd; do not attribute this to Durkheim (who saw movements as disorder-causing).
- The Dharma Sabha is the counter-movement against sati abolition — not a reform body.

## 2.5 Thinkers / theories table

Name	Concept	Key Idea	NCERT page
Emile Durkheim	Movements as threats to social integration	Saw social movements as forces leading to disorder	113
Karl Marx (via E.P. Thompson)	Moral economy of the crowd	The "crowd" has a shared understanding of right and wrong; protest is morally disciplined	113
E.P. Thompson	Moral economy	Marxist historian; rehabilitated the "crowd" as moral agent	113
Rajni Kothari	1970s surge of movements	Attributed Indian movement upsurge to dissatisfaction with parliamentary democracy and elite capture	115
Mahatma Gandhi	Satyagraha, ahimsa, charkha	Added a new protest repertoire — Dandi salt march, picketing, TLA (1918)	112, 120
B.R. Ambedkar	Dalit identity; neo-Buddhism	Neo-Buddhist followers revived "Dalit" in modern sense in early 1970s	121
B.P. Wadia	First Indian trade union	Founded the first trade union in Madras, April 1918 (Theosophical Society)	120
Narayana Guru	Redemptive reform among Ezhavas	Kerala social reformer; textbook example of redemptive movement	114

Name	Concept	Key Idea	NCERT page
Birsa Munda	Tribal uprising	Led adivasi resistance against the British in the Jharkhand region	124
Gaura Devi	Chipko leader	Reni village Mahila Mandal leader; led a famous Chipko action	117
Kanu Sanyal	Naxalbari	Cited in Box 8.5 on the Naxalite movement	114
Nongbri	North-East autonomy	2003 analysis of NE movements shifting from secessionism to autonomy within the Constitution	124
G.B. Pant	Backward Classes politics	Cited in Box 8.8 on the early Backward Classes question	123

## Practice MCQs

## PYQ Alignment

This chapter is a high-yield CUET source: questions typically draw on the typology of social movements (reformist/redemptive/revolutionary), key dates and founders (AITUC 1920, B.P. Wadia 1918, AISC 1926), and named movements (Tebhaga, Telangana, Chipko, Jharkhand). Expect about 8–12 MCQs per cycle covering definitions, matching pairs, and statement-based correctness items grounded in §§8.1–8.8.

### CUET 2025 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

**Q.9 (CUET 2025)** During the 1960s Banshi and fellow peasants organised committees to fight against atrocities of landlords. Which type of movement was this?

- A) Redemptive B) Reformist C) Revolutionary D) Radical **Tests:** Typology of social movements applied to a peasant case. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.24 (CUET 2025)** Which of the following is an example of a reformist social movement?

- A) Right to Information B) Bolshevik Revolution C) Naxalite Movement D) Anti-racism Movement **Tests:** Reformist movements seek gradual change within the system. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.27 (CUET 2025)** Arrange the following events in chronological order: (A) Bengal Revolt (B) Champaran Satyagraha (C) Deccan Riots (D) Bardoli Satyagraha.

- A) (C), (A), (B), (D) B) (A), (C), (B), (D) C) (C), (B), (D), (A) D) (B), (D), (C), (A) **Tests:** Chronology of peasant agitations. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.32 (CUET 2025)** Which of the following statements are correct in respect of the New Farmers' Movement? (A) It began in Punjab and Tamil Nadu. (B) It was party oriented. (C) Ideology was anti-state and anti-urban. (D) The focus of demand was price and its related issues.

- A) (A), (B) and (D) only B) (A), (C) and (D) only C) (A), (B) and (C) only D) (B), (C) and (D) only **Tests:** Features of New Farmers' Movement. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.34 (CUET 2025)** The Adi Dharma Movement in India belonged to which category of social movement?

- A) Caste-based movement B) Worker's movement C) Peasant movement D) Ecological movement **Tests:** Adi Dharma as a Dalit/caste-based movement. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.38 (CUET 2025)** Arrange the following in order of their year of occurrence: (A) Statehood for Jharkhand (B) All India Trade Union Congress (C) Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (D) All India Kisan Sabha.

- A) (A), (C), (D), (B) B) (C), (B), (D), (A) C) (B), (D), (C), (A) D) (C), (D), (B), (A) **Tests:** Chronology — AITUC (1920), Bihar Kisan Sabha (1929), AIKS (1936), Jharkhand (2000). **Answer:** Not in extracted key

### CUET 2024 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

**Q.27 (CUET 2024)** The Chipko Movement is an example of:

- A) Peasant movement B) Workers movement C) Ecological movement D) Dalit movement **Tests:** Chipko as ecological movement. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.29 (CUET 2024)** Social conflict arises when a group feels worse off than others. This is called:

- A) Relative Deprivation Theory B) Reformatory Action Theory C) Redemptive Action Theory D) Resource Mobilisation Theory **Tests:** Relative deprivation theory of social movements. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.30 (CUET 2024)** Characteristics of post-1947 women's movement: (A) Women involved in nation building (B) Growth of autonomous women's movement (C) All women face equal discrimination (D) Change in ideology and strategy

- A) A, B and D only B) A, B and C only C) A, B, C and D D) B, C and D only **Tests:** Post-Independence women's movement features. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.37 (CUET 2024)** Which of the following is an example of environmental movement in India?

- A) Narmada Bachao Andolan B) Dalit Movement C) Trade Union Movement D) Women's Movement

**Tests:** Narmada Bachao Andolan as environmental movement.

**Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.45 (CUET 2024)** Which movement focused on protecting forests and natural resources in India?

- A) Chipko Movement B) Dalit Movement C) Workers Movement D) Farmers Movement

**Tests:** Chipko Movement for forest protection. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.49 (CUET 2024)** Which of the following is an example of collective action?

- A) Individual decision-making B) Social movement C) Personal migration D) Family dispute

**Tests:** Social movements as collective action. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

### CUET 2023 — Actual PYQs from this chapter

**Q.16 (CUET 2023)** The criteria for inclusion in civil society is that the organisation should be:

- A) State controlled B) Non-state controlled C) Commercial D) Profit making

**Tests:** Civil society as non-state, non-profit sphere. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.23 (CUET 2023)** "Anjuman-e-Khawatin-e-Islam" refers to:

- A) Leading journal for women in Punjab B) All-India Muslim League conference C) All-India Muslim Ladies Conference D) All-India Muslim Scholars Conference

**Tests:** Women's movement — All-India Muslim Ladies Conference. **Answer:** Not in extracted key

**Q.40 (CUET 2023)** Which organisation is an International Non-Government Organisation? A. Red Cross B. European Union C. Médecins Sans Frontières D. ASEAN.

- A) C and D only B) A and B only C) A and D only D) A and C only

**Tests:** INGOs — Red Cross and MSF (not EU, ASEAN). **Answer:** Not in extracted key