

CIVICS

Chapter 9: STRUGGLES FOR EQUALITY



STRUGGLES FOR EQUALITY

Financial Inequality

- As we have read previously, Kanta, a domestic worker enjoys equal suffrage. But when it comes to taking her child to a doctor, she has to go to a government hospital while her employer gets private medical care. Kanta & countless such other people living a life of poverty can't afford houses in prime locations. Nor can they send their children to a private school. So citizens might enjoy equal voting rights but there is the fog of financial inequality that engulfs the society.
- This financial inequality then spills over to the business and professional sector as well. First of all, a poor student can't afford education in the premier institutions of the country. So he/she has much fewer opportunities than her richer counterparts. She has to remain happy with medium paying job.
- On the other hand, your book gives the example of juice seller who cannot compete with giant brands who can advertise well, employ thousands of people & use advanced technology. The poor juice seller has to contend with a limited scope of his business.



Gender-Based Inequality

Apart from such financial inequalities, there are also other forms of inequality. In Bollywood, the female actresses are much paid lesser than their male counterparts. This wage gap also exists in many other professions. The female workers get paid less for same amount of work than their male counterparts do.

Not just in case of wages, the women are also subject to inequality in other aspects of professional life as well. Some work is normally considered to be men oriented work although there is no logic behind that notion. We also have mentioned in the previous chapter how jobs like bus driving, masonry etc are occupied by males - 99% of the time.

Caste & Religion Based Inequality

Another kind of inequality which we have learnt in the previous chapters is caste or religion-based discrimination. You have read the story of Omprakash Valmiki who was not allowed to sit in front in his class, who was made to sweep the whole playground while his classmates watched him. Him being a Dalit made him a subject to such discriminatory practices. On other hand, the Ansaris were unable to get an apartment because of religious discrimination.

The Fight for Equality

As said earlier, that nobody is going to grant rights that these marginalised people deserve. It is up to victims of inequality that they fight to take back what is rightfully theirs.

There are many ways this struggle for equality can happen. Sometimes, like Rosa Parks, act of a single person can also inspire other members of the community to stand up & ask for equality. Sometimes it is group of persons in the community that take proactive measures to try and eliminate the aspects of inequality.

Reasons for Inequality in India

Though the Constitution of India has granted equality to all its citizens, we find that inequality still exists in the Indian society. Some of the reasons for this are:

- Many people are poor in India. Poverty and lack of resources have created inequality among the people.
- The increasing privatisation of health and education has also led to inequalities in the society.
- The caste system is one of the key factors which has brought about social inequality in India.
- Discrimination on the basis of religion and gender has also given rise to inequality in the society.



Poverty and the lack of resources have led to inequalities in the society

Struggles for Equality

People all over the world have made efforts to fight for equality and justice. Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar are some of the many people who fought for equality. In India, many organisations have been fighting for equality. The Tawa Matsya Sangha in Madhya Pradesh is one such organisation which has been fighting for the people who have been displaced from their homes due to large scale projects.

- Building of a large dam in a forest area not only leads to the destruction of the forests in that area but also displaces many people living there from their homes.
- These displaced people are mostly poor and they struggle to rebuild their homes. The chawls and bastis, where they live are often uprooted. The children suffer the most as they struggle to complete their education after being displaced from their homes.
- This has become a common problem in our country. To fight for their justice, many people



Tawa Reservoir

The building of the Tawa dam displaced large communities of forest dwellers.

have come together in support of such displaced communities.

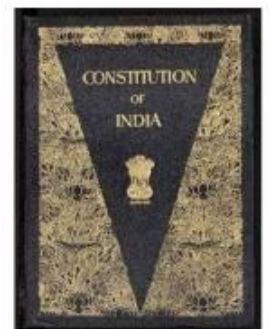
- One such organisation is the Tawa Matsya Sangha (TMS). It was formed when the Tawa dam was built on the River Tawa. The River Tawa originates in the Mahadeo hills of the Chindwara District of Madhya Pradesh. The river joins River Narmada in Hoshangabad.
- The building of the dam submerged vast stretches of forest land. The forest dwellers after being displaced moved to various places. Some of them settled near the dam and besides cultivating small pieces of land, they also caught fishes. Their earnings however were meager.
- In 1994, the government gave the right to fishing in the Tawa Reservoir to private contractors. These contractors hired cheap labourers from outside and forced the people of the nearby villages to leave the area.
- In order to protect their interests, the people of the village formed an organisation, the Tawa Matsya Sangha which organised rallies and blocked the roads demanding their rights to fish in the Tawa Dam.
- After these protests, the government created a committee to assess the situation. The committee recommended that the villagers should be allowed to fish in the reservoir. As a result, the government granted the fishing rights to the local people. A five year lease agreement was signed for this purpose.
- The earnings of the fish workers increased substantially because the TMS also set up a cooperative which bought the fishes from the workers at a fair price.
- The TMS also gave loans to the fishermen for the purchase and repair of fishing nets. TMS thus made fishermen self sufficient and self reliant.



It was after the formation of the TMS that the villagers got the right to carry out the fishing activities in the Tawa Reservoir

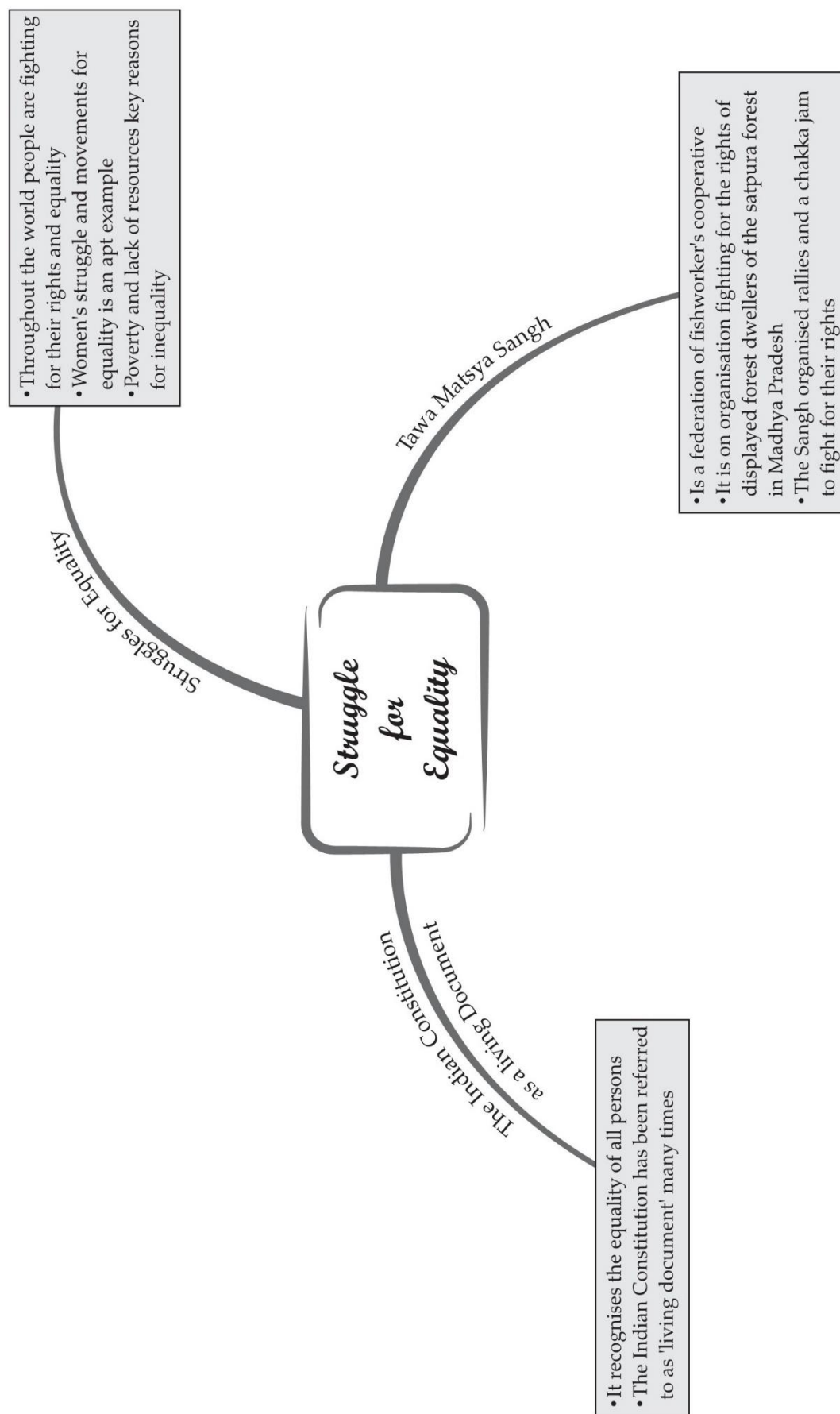
The Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution has granted the Right to Justice and Equality to all the citizens of the country. In fact, the issue of equality is central to any democracy. The fishermen of TMS believe that the rights of equality and justice could become a reality if people themselves start a movement to fight against various issues. What is important for us to understand is that the dignity and self-respect of each person could be realised if no one is discriminated against and all people have equal access to resources. This is possible only under a democratic government.



MIND MAP : LEARNING MADE SIMPLE

CHAPTER-30



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions :

Question 1. Who hold the highest power and subjugate others

- (a) Politicians
- (b) Each one of us
- (c) Dalit
- (d) President

Question 2. Which is full of examples of persons who have come together to fight against inequality and for issues of justice?

- (a) Geography
- (b) Economics
- (c) History
- (d) Biology

Question 3. The Madhya Pradesh government accepted the demand of the TMS in the year:

- (a) 1997
- (b) 1988
- (c) 1979

Question 4. Following provisions has been mentioned in our constitution except

- (a) No person can be discriminated against on the basis of their religion, race, caste, place of birth
- (b) Every person has access to all public
- (c) Untouchability has not been abolished
- (d) Every person is equal before the law

Question 5. What makes people of India equal?

- (a) Religion
- (b) Sex
- (c) Vote
- (d) None of these

Question 6. A _____ is an artificial lake where water is collected and kept in quantity for use.

- (a) Dam
- (b) Tank
- (c) Reservoir

Question 7. _____ is a key feature of democracy and influences all aspects of its functioning.

- (a) Fraternity
- (b) Liberty
- (c) Justice
- (d) Equality

Question 8. Which of the following creates difficulty for poor people?

- (a) Privatisation
- (b) Casteism
- (c) Sex distribution
- (d) All of these

Question 9. The poor are deprived in India, because of:

- (a) Poverty and lack of resources;
- (b) Illiteracy and resources;
- (c) Their agricultural work

Question 10. Which of the following is not the limitation of building dams

- (a) Thousands of people are displaced
- (b) Forest area are cleared
- (c) Wild animals suffer
- (d) Helpful in irrigation

Question 11. Deficiency of what makes difficulties for poors to establish their business?

- (a) Deficiency of money to buy good resources
- (b) Deficiency of efforts
- (c) Deficiency of skills
- (d) Deficiency of time

Question 12. The government gave rights for _____ in Tawa reservoir.

- (a) Fishing
- (b) Hunting
- (c) Grazing cattle

Question 13. _____ have been employed to cook the meal for school children in Mid day meal scheme

- (a) Educated women

- (b) Dalit men
- (c) Dalit women
- (d) None of these

Question 14. Mainly the domestic workers have to face

- (a) love of owner
- (b) insult of owner
- (c) respect of owner
- (d) none of these

Question 15. The Tawa Dam was completed in:

- (a) 1958
- (b) 1978
- (c) 1968

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. The soul of democracy is _____.
2. _____ stands for Tawa Matsya Sangh
3. The dignity and self-respect of each person can only be realized if he/she has _____.
4. The Tawa dam began to be built _____.
5. Lady who fought against discrimination in the US was _____.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. The increasing privatization of health services and the neglect of government hospitals have made it difficult for most poor people.
2. Ansaris were not getting a flat on rent because of their religion.
3. In 2006, the Madhya Pradesh government decided to give to the people displaced by the Tawa dam the fishing rights for the reservoir.

➤ **Very Short Questions :**

1. Who was Swapna?
2. Why did Swapna take loan from the local trader?
3. On what condition did the trader agree to give loan to Swapna?
4. What is putting-out arrangement?
5. Who are mostly employed in the Impex garment factory?
6. What do women workers do in the Impex garment factory?

7. Whom does the garment exporting factory export the shirts to?
8. Why people living in India are so unequal?
9. Why teacher forced omprakash Valmiki to sweep the school yard?
10. Why does a Dalit girl drop out of school in large number?

➤ Short Questions :

1. How a writer and singer can be active in the fight against democracy?
2. How Indian constitution justify rights to equality.
3. Can you describe two methods of struggle that the women's movement used to raise issues?
4. How are small farmers in the grip of the local trader?
5. How do weaver's cooperatives reduce the dependence of weavers on the cloth merchants?

➤ Long Questions :

1. Who are involved in putting-out system? How is this system advantageous and disadvantageous for the weavers?
2. How does market work move in favour of the rich and powerful? What are the ways to overcome them?
3. Why did the villagers set up Tawa Matsya Sangh?
4. What do you think is meant by the expression 'power over the ballot box'? Discuss.
5. Write a short note on the Impex garment factory.

ANSWER KEY –

➤ Multiple Choice Answer :

1. (b) Each one of us
2. (c) History
3. (a) 1997
4. (c) Untouchability has not been abolished
5. (c) Vote
6. (c) Reservoir
7. (d) Equality
8. (a) Privatisation
9. (a) Poverty and lack of resources;

10. (d) Helpful in irrigation
11. (a) Deficiency of money to buy good resources
12. (a) Fishing
13. (c) Dalit women
14. (b) insult of owner
15. (b) 1978

➤ **Fill in the blanks :**

1. equality
2. TMS
3. adequate resources
4. 1958
5. Rosa Parks

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F) :**

1. True
2. True
3. False

➤ **Very Short Answer :**

1. Swapna was a small farmer, growing cotton on her small piece of land.
2. She took loan from the local traders to buy seeds, fertilizers and pesticides for the cultivation of cotton.
3. He agreed to give loan to Swapna on a condition that she would sell all her cotton to him.
4. Under putting-out arrangement the cloth merchants supply the raw material to the weavers and receive the finished product.
5. They are women.
6. They do thread cutting, buttoning, ironing and packaging.
7. The garment exporting factory exports the shirts to foreign buyers.
8. Because of poverty and the lack of resource.
9. Because he was a Dalit.
10. Because of poverty, social discrimination and lack of good quality school facilities.

➤ **Short Answer :**

1. A writer through their stories and a singer by their songs can inspire us and make us believe strongly in an issue and can influence our efforts to correct the situation.
2. Indian constitution recognizes all Indians as equal before the law, it states that there should be no discrimination among person on the basis of sex, caste, religion or whether a person is rich or poor.
3. Two methods of struggle that the women's movement used to raise issues are by raising awareness and protesting.
4. Small farmers cannot do without the help of the local traders.

They depend on them for various reasons:

- i. During cropping season they take loan from the local traders.
- ii. Whenever, there is an illness in the family they go to the local trader for help.
- iii. Farmers also face seasonal unemployment. There are times in the year when they have no work and hence no income. During this time their survival depends on borrowing money from him.

Due to these reasons small farmers easily come in the grip of the powerful local traders.

5. In a cooperative people with common interests come together and work for their mutual benefit. In a weaver's cooperative, the weavers form a group and take up certain activities collectively. They get yarn from the yarn dealer and distribute it among the weavers. The cooperative also does the marketing. In this way, the role of the merchants is reduced and weavers get a fair price on the cloth that they produce by dint of their hard labour.

➤ Long Answer :

1. The persons involved in putting-out system are weavers and merchants.

This system is advantageous for the weavers in two ways:

- i. They do not have to spend their money on the purchase of yarn.
- ii. They are also free from the tension of selling the finished cloth.

This system is disadvantageous for the weavers in these ways:

- i. They have to depend on the merchants for raw materials as well as markets.
 - ii. Under this system the merchants become very powerful. They give orders for what is to be made and they pay a very low price for making the cloth.
 - iii. The weavers have no way of knowing who they are making the cloth for or at what price it will be sold.
2. It is usually the rich and the powerful who earn the maximum profits in the market. These people have money and they own the factories, the large shops, large land holdings, etc. The poor have to depend on the rich and the powerful for various things. They have to depend for

loans, for raw materials and marketing of their goods and most often for employment. This dependence makes the poor miserable. They are easily exploited in the market. They get low wages in spite of their hard labour and the rich earn huge profits at the cost of the workers. There are ways to overcome these such as forming cooperatives of producers and ensuring that laws are following strictly.

3. In 1994, the government gave the rights for fishing in the Tawa reservoir to private contractors. These contractors drove the local people away and got cheap labour from outside. The contractors began to threaten the villagers, who did not want to leave, by bringing in hoodlums. The villagers stood united and set up an organization to protect their rights.
4. The expression 'power over the ballot box' means all adults in India have the equal right to vote during elections. This 'power over the ballot box' has been used by people to elect or replace their representatives. But this feeling of equality that the ballot box provides, because the vote of one person is as good as that of another, does not extend to most people's lives. The increasing privatization of health services and the neglect of government hospitals have made it difficult for most poor people to get good quality health care. These people do not have the resources to afford expensive private health services. Similarly, the man who sells juice does not have the resources to compete with all of the major companies who sell branded drinks through expensive advertising.
5. The impex garment factory employs mostly women. The workers work on temporary basis. They can be asked to leave any time. Their wages are fixed according to their skills. The highest paid among the workers are the tailors who get about Rs. 3,000 per month. Women are employed as helpers. They are engaged in thread cutting, buttoning, ironing and packaging. They get the lowest wages.