
UNIT 13 AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS

Structure

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 What are the Agrarian Movements and Agrarian Classes?
 - 13.2.1 Meaning
 - 13.2.2 Differentiation within the Agrarian Classes
- 13.3 Approaches to Study Agrarian Movements
- 13.4 Agrarian Movements in the Pre-Independence Period
- 13.5 Agrarian Movements in the Post-Independence Period
 - 13.5.1 Rural Poor: Agricultural Labourers and Small/Poor/Marginal Peasants
 - 13.5.2 Farmers/Middle Peasants/Kulaks/Rich Peasants/Rural Rich
 - 13.5.3 Globalisation and Farmers' Movements
- 13.6 Summary
- 13.7 Exercises

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Different agrarian classes have resorted to collective action through out the pre-Independence and post-Independence periods. The volume of participation of the classes, response of the state and success of the agrarian movements have depended on the nature of leadership, issues, patterns of mobilisation and the attitude of the authorities. These days the agrarian movements are referred to as among the social movements. This unit discusses the agrarian movements, the reasons and context of their rise or fall, nature of issues taken up by them, nature of leadership and patterns of mobilisation. The basic focus of the unit is on those agrarian movements which took place in the post-Independence period. However, in order to give the students a background to these movements, section 13.4 also discusses the essential features of such movements in the pre-Independence period.

13.2 WHAT ARE THE AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS AND AGRARIAN CLASSES?

13.2.1 Meaning

Agrarian movements include the movements of agrarian classes which are related to agriculture in terms of working on the land or in terms of both working on land and its ownership. In other words, these are the movements of the agricultural labourers, poor and small peasant/tenants and farmers/kulaks/rich peasants/rural rich. The issues taken up in the agrarian movements are generally economic. But in several cases the economic and social issues overlap. Such cases include where the agrarian class is both an economic and social group; for example in the case of dalits and women the economic and social (self-respect, dignity and gender based discrimination) are also involved. Since you have studied about the movements of dalits, backward classes and women (focusing on the social issues) in units 7, 8 and 10 respectively, this unit primarily focuses on the mobilisation of agrarian classes on the economic issues. However, whenever necessary even non-economic issues are discussed.

13.2.2 Differentiation within the Agrarian Classes

Agrarian society is not a homogeneous unit. It is divided on economic and social basis. The mobilisation of an agrarian group depends on the specific issues related to it. The collaboration between different groups or conflict among them also depends on the convergence of the group interests. Therefore, in order to understand the movements of different agrarian classes it is necessary to discuss the criteria to designate a particular class. There are two broad frameworks which are used by the scholars to differentiate or identify different agrarian classes —, i.e., non-Marxian and the Marxian. The advocates of the former take into consideration the multiple factors like caste, geographical zones and size of land holdings to identify the agrarian classes. The classes which belong to the low castes are usually identified as those belonging to the agricultural labourer/poor and small peasants and those belonging to the high castes and middle castes are identified as belonging to the upper classes — rich peasants and land lords. The followers of the latter — the Marxian approach consider the non-Marxian approach as unscientific and give an alternative framework. They argue that a scientific way to differentiate peasantry is to see the proportion of family labour-power in relation to the outside labour-power in working on the land along with the ownership of land. This criterion is based on the writings of Mao and Lenin. Utsa Patnaik has synthesised the criterion of Mao and Lenin in her book *Peasant Class Differentiation: A Study in Method with Reference to Haryana* (Oxford, 1987). Patnaik's model has been used by some other scholars as well. According to this framework those who do not own land but work on other's land or own smaller size of the land holdings and work more on others land than on their own land belong to the classes of agricultural labourers and small and poor peasants; those who own land and agricultural resources, employ agricultural labourers, poor and small peasants or those who own land and do not themselves work on land (except for supervision) but depend on the outside labour are categorised as the rural rich (middle peasants, rich peasants and landlords). Utsa Patnaik's model, however, is more applicable to the areas which have witnessed capitalism than those which still have predominance of feudal mode of production.

In this unit we have grouped the agrarian groups into the following classes:

- i) **The Rural Poor: Agricultural labourers and small/poor/marginal peasants** — Agricultural labourers do not own land but work on others land for wages either as agricultural labourers or tenants. Small/poor/marginal peasants have land but it not enough to meet the basic needs. They have to work on others land also; and
- ii) **Farmers/middle peasants/kulaks/rich peasant/rural rich** — These classes own land and other required paraphernalia in agriculture. They work on their land or do not work themselves except doing the supervisory work along with employing agricultural labourers.

As you will study in the sub-section 13.5.2 the last three decades of the twentieth century saw the movements of a group of agrarian classes, which shared a lot of common characteristics. Notwithstanding, the reservation on the usage of these terms, this category has been addressed as kulaks, middle peasants or the farmers.

13.3 APPROACHES TO STUDY AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS

Traditionally there have been two approaches to study the agrarian movements – the Marxian and non-Marxian. The former analyse these movements in the light of the social relations of production or the economic relations – how the poorer agrarian classes get mobilised against their exploitation by the exploiting classes. The latter give more emphasis to the cultural and non-economic factors. In the early 1980s there was an addition to the Marxian approach. Influenced by the Gramsci's writings this approach came to be known as the subaltern approach. Subaltern school has had the most profound impact on the study of the agrarian movements. It has been popularised by Ranajit Guha in the series of subaltern studies. This approach is critical of the classical Marxism, which gives primacy to the economic factors over other factors. The subaltern school argues that the peasants have their own consciousness, leadership and other cultural factors which play much more important role than the class. The subaltern school is also criticised by classical Marxists as separating consciousness and culture from the economic structure and thus not giving the true picture of the reality. Rajender Singh analyses the secondary literature on the agrarian movements as parts of the social movements in the post-Marxian perspective in his book *Social Movements, Old and New: Post-Modernist Critique*.

13.4 AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Ghanshyam Shah while reviewing the literature on social movements in India in the book *Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature* points out that Political Science has been averse to the peoples' participation in politics and movements. In the similar vein a section of literature has categorised the peasants as passive and docile subjects, uninterested in participating in the movements. Barrington Moore Jr. is representative of this perspective. A large number of scholars disputed this view, prominent among them included Kathleen Gough, A. R. Desai, D. N. Dhanagre and Ranajit Guha. In fact, Kathleen Gough identified 77 revolts during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Almost all regions of the country witnessed agrarian movements during the pre-Independence period. Popularly known as the peasant movements, these movements involved all exploited classes – tenants, agricultural labourers, artisans, etc. Ranajit Guha, actually includes those landlords as exploited classes who were indebted to the moneylenders. Among the most prominent of these movements were Oudh peasant movements in UP, Kheda movement in Gujarat, Mopilla movement in Malabar (Kerala), Champaran peasant movement in Bihar, Wahabi, Fairabi and Tebhaga movements of Bengal and Telengana movement in Madras presidencies (areas forming present Andhra Pradesh).

When you compare the characteristics of these movements with those of the post-Independence period which are discussed in section 13.5 of this unit, you will notice that there are differences in the issues, nature of leadership, ideologies and pattern of mobilisation in the agrarian movements of these two phases — pre and post-Independence. The pre-Independence period movements can be termed as the anti-colonial movements as well, since these movements were against the classes which were supporters of the

British empire — the landlords, moneylenders and other exploiting classes. The issues raised in these movements were related to the nature of agrarian relations. These relations were built on the exploitation of the agrarian classes — tenants/peasants/agricultural labourers, artisans, etc. In order to meet the requirement of the colonial forces and to satisfy their feudal needs, the landlords exploited them in several ways. These included unreasonable increase in the rent, forced gifts (nazarans), *begar* (forced labour) physical torture, insecurity of tenure (eviction). These problems were compounded by natural calamities like famines and flood, commercialisation of crops, indebtedness. The failure to meet the economic and non-economic requirements of the landlords the poor agrarian classes were not only evicted from the land they cultivated they were also tortured physically.

As mentioned earlier the agrarian classes were not silent sufferers. They reacted to the exploitative system in different ways. These ways included both — the ways which James Scott calls “everyday forms of resistance” and in the forms of organised peasant movements. The leadership of the peasant movements of the pre-Independence period articulated the problems of the peasants and mobilised them into action against the landlords, moneylenders and the British administration. The general point which emerges from a large number of studies is that the leadership of these movements came from the non-peasant classes. Kapil Kumar in his book *Peasants in Revolt: Tenants, Landless, Congress and the Raj in Oudh* indicates that though the leadership Oudh peasant movement did not belong to peasants as such, it ran parallel to the leadership of the leadership of the national movement. In the course of time with the merger of this movement with the national movement the leadership of the peasant movement was taken over by the leadership of the national movement. Similar observation is made by scholars some about the Chamapran peasant movement. Religion, caste, nationalism and Marxism provided ideological basis of the peasant during this phase. Religion and caste became the rallying points of the peasants in Oudh, Mopillaha and Wahabi and Fairdie uprisings. The usage of religion generated a debate among the scholars; one group of them categoring such mobilisation as communal while other linking region with the economic problems of the peasants. The attack on the Indian exploited classes — landlords and moneylenders and participation of the peasantry in the armed insurgency in Telengana under the banner of the Communist Party of India are examples of how ideologies of nationalism and Marxism contributed to the mobilisation of the peasants in their movements. The movements took different forms — demonstration, destroying the properties of the landlords and money lenders, boycott of the landlords by the barbers and washer men. On several occasions the movements resulted in violent clashes between the agents of landlords and police.

The peasant movements of the pre-Independence period had impact on the programmes of the Indian National Congress. The Congress Socialist group within the Congress which included later generation of socialists, communists and future Prime Minister of India advocated the need for the drastic land reforms. The Congress appointed a committee to look into the distress of agrarian classes and to suggest measures to ameliorate their conditions. This had its impact on the agrarian policies of country when it became independent. As the land reforms became the state subject, depending on the willingness and political will of the leadership, land reforms became the subject to reckon with in different states of India.

13.5 AGRARIAN MOVEMENTS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Certain developments in Indian political economy of the post-Independence era can provide landmarks about the genesis and decline of the agrarian movements. These are the policy measures introduced by the state during the 1950s, both at the national and provincial levels to bring about the agrarian transformation — through land reforms, community development programmes and agricultural Extension schemes; the green revolution in select areas of the country during the 1960s, and opening of agricultural sector to the world market through the latest phase of globalisation from the 1990s. These developments have resulted in emergence of new set of issues, rise of new agrarian classes and decline of erstwhile classes, new types of organisations and patterns of political mobilisation. This section of the unit discusses movements of different agrarian classes. These classes are agricultural labourers, poor and small peasants and the farmers/middle peasants/kulaks/rich peasants/rural rich.

13.5.1 Rural Poor: Agricultural Labourers and Small/Poor/Marginal Peasants

The rural poor is a conglomerate of the poorer classes — landless agricultural labourers, tenants, poor, small or marginal farmers who own uneconomic landholdings and supplement their income by working as wage labourers either in agriculture or informal non-agrarian sectors. Most them belong to low castes — lower backwards and dalits. Unlike the kulaks/middle/rich peasants they face dual problems — social discrimination and economic exploitation. Therefore, while the mobilisation of the better off agrarian classes has mainly been around the economic issue, that of the rural poor has focused both on the social and economic issues. They are sometimes mobilised exclusively on the social and cultural issues, they are also mobilised mainly on the economic issues. Assertion of dalit identity, mainly under the influence of Ambedkarism through different social and cultural organisations of dalits, finding expression in different ways including conversion to another religions are examples of mobilisation on the social and cultural issue. You have read about it in unit 7 which deals with dalit movement in India. This section confines itself to the mobilisation of the rural poor on the economic issues. But as economic problems are intertwined with their social status, their social and economic issues can not be mechanically separated.

The agricultural labourers and poor/small peasants have been mobilised into collective actions through out the post-Independence era in different states of India by different kinds of organisations. The latter included the socialist and communist parties, Gandhians, voluntary groups/NGOs, independent individuals and naxalites. This sub-section discusses some examples of movements of agrarian classes which form the rural poor.

The first two decades following Impendence saw the movements of the rural poor in Uttar Pradesh by the socialists and communists on the one hand and by the naxalites and the Communist Party of India on the other hand. The issues on which they were mobilised in the western Uttar Pradesh included redistribution of the *Gaon Samaj* land, abolition of *begar*, giving better wages, lifting of the sanction imposed by the rich classes on the poorer classes for cutting grass needed as fodder from the fields of the former, and protection of the women of the poorer classes from the exploitation of the

men belonging to the richer classes. The forms of protest included hunger strike and demonstrations. The 1960s also saw the mobilisation of dalits by Republican Party of India, which unlike the BSP of the later period took up the cultural issues along with the economic problems. Besides, there are innumerable examples of the protest of the agricultural labourers and poor/small peasants in the form of informal group organisations or “every day forms of resistance” (Jagpal Singh, *Capitalism and Dependence: Chap.IV “Dependence, Resistance and Sanctions”*). In Basti district of eastern Uttar Pradesh, the CPI had organised the Land Grab movement during the 1960s in order to give surplus land to the poorer classes. However, the traditional left and the socialists were unable to mobilise dalits in several parts of the country like some area of Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkahnd, Chhattisgarh and Orissa. This was because of their neglect of dalit question; though the socialists showed concern for the caste, their focus were the backward castes, not the dalits. This lacuna of the conventional left was corrected by the naxalites in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. Their ability to combine the economic issues with the castes disabilities enabled them to mobilise the low caste agricultural labourers and poor peasants. Their resolve to get the land reforms implemented and abolish caste discrimination made them popular among these sections. They are not averse to use violence to eliminate “class enemies”, which include police personals, landlords and some politicians. Till recently all naxalite organisations did not participate in the elections; now some of them do take part in elections. Among the most important naxal outfits are *Janashakti* and People’s War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar Pradesh Kisan Sabha (BPKS) and Marxist Coordination Committee (MCC) in Bihar.

Recent decades have seen the movement of poor peasants who have been affected by the negative impact of development introduced by the state, especially funded by the World Bank. Taking recourse to Gandhian means of protest these movements emerged have as alternative mode of movements. Concerned individuals, civil society organisations, voluntary organisations and NGOs are playing significant roles in such movements. *Narmada Bachao Andolan* led by Medha Patkar is one of the most important examples of such movements.

13.5.2 Farmers/Middle Peasants/Kulaks/Rich Peasants/Rural Rich

The two decades of the last century — the sixties and seventies, witnessed the movements of a section, which is known by different names — farmers, middle peasants, kulaks, rich peasants or rural rich. These movements had their own organisations and leadership. These movements were: those of two separate organisations of the same name — the *Bharatiya Kisan Unions* (BKUs) led by Bhupender Singh Mann in Punjab and by Mahender Singh Tikait in Uttar Pradesh; of *Shetkari Sangathan* led by Sharad Joshi in Maharashtra; of *Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha* led by Prof. Nanjundaswami; of *Khedyut Samaj* in Guajarat; of *Vivasayigal Sangam* led by Narayanaswami Naidu in Tamil Nadu.

Characteristics

These movements shared certain characteristics: they emerged in prosperous regions of the country, which have benefited from the green revolution; they were the movements of rural rich, which included rich peasants, landlords and self-cultivating middle peasants in which the middle peasants had the preponderance; these groups had benefited from the land reforms including the abolition of landlordism; socially the middle or intermediate castes (Jats, Gujars, Yadavs, Muslim high castes in UP; Marathas in Maharashtra;

Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka; Patels in Guajrat) formed the largest composition of them); unlike the peasant movements of the pre-Independence period their issues and demands are related to the market economy like remunerative prices of the agricultural produce, subsidised inputs, reduction in the electricity bills, increase in the time of availability of electricity; their “apolitical” or “non-political” character; claim to represent the rural (*bharat*) interests against urban (India) on the plea the *bharat* is exploited by India; they overlook the division in the rural society and project themselves to be representative of entire rural society; they were being led by a new kind of leadership; they raise new types of issue, etc.

Of these three movements — *Shetkari Sangathan* in Maharashtra, *Karnataka Raiitha Sangha* in Karnataka and BKU movement of UP deserve special discussion for different reasons. It was the “*Bharat vs. India*” thesis of Sharad Joshi which highlighted the rural-urban divide more prominently. Besides, as you will notice later in this unit, Sharad Joshi is only leader who has supported the liberalisation policy of the state, and who also worked as the advisor to the Government of India during the V. P. Singh’s regime. *The Karnataka Rajaya Raiytha Sangha* movement in Karnataka occupies special place due to the socialist background of its leader - Prof. Nanjundaswami. The most striking has been the nature of leadership of the BKU in UP and the role of the traditional institution of *khap* (caste council) in mobilising the farmers.

Genesis of Farmers’ Movements

Since farmers movements are the post- green revolution movements and largely occurred in the green revolution belt, they found the terms of trade against the agricultural sector. The rising cost of input in agriculture could not be met with the returns of the produce. Besides, inability of the system to provide electricity along with the increasing indebtedness to the public institution mainly to meet the input and infrastructural requirement gave birth to the new set of problems of the farmers. Though placed in superior position to the large proportion of the rural poor, this section found itself neglected by the state. Populist promises by the politicians and the hold of this section on the rural vote bank contributed to the feeling of being cheated by the political class. Their expectation from the system further rose with the increasing share of legislators in the centre and state since the era of the Janata Party government in the 1970s. This happened when people in general lost faith in politics, which to them meant formal political institutions — mainly leaders, political parties and elections.

Under these circumstances the farmers responded positively to alternative mode mobilisation, which was marked by the mobilisation on the “apolitical” or “nonpolitical” plank, projected the rural sectors as a homogeneous unit, which was exploited by the urban vested interests. The leadership which not was professional type found it easy to provide leadership to these movements. The example of the BKU movement in UP can be an appropriate example in this context. It was the last of these movements; while other farmers movements took place in the 1970s and the early 1980s, the BKU movement of UP took place mainly in 1988-1989. It was a time when there was complete vacuum of leadership of the farmers caused by the death of Charan Singh on May 29, 1987 and earlier disintegration of the farmers movement in UP following the death of R M Lohia in 1967. This gap was filled up by political party of Charan Singh with frequent changes in its nomenclature. Earlier while in the Congress, Charan Singh was opposed to the agitational politics, though he successfully devised an

strategy to create his political constituency among the backward classes and the middle/rich peasants. But collective mobilisation into political agitation by his party was not as regular or organised as was by the socialists and the communists. The massive political mobilisation by non-party political organisation was by the BKU of Tikait. For the first time the traditional institution of *khap* (caste council) was active in mobilisation of the farmers. This traditional leadership of *khap* (caste council), which was headed by the leader of a *khap* of Jats, Mahender Singh Tikait also included the leaders of *khaps* of several castes.

Farmers' Movements before the BKU

Prior to the BKU mobilisation in the 1980s, the farmers of UP were mobilised mainly by the leftist forces which included both the socialists and the communists. But their mobilisation mainly took place in the 1950s and the 1960s. Apart from the socialists and communists, Charan Singh also attempted to mobilise the farmers of UP during this period. But he did not mobilise them into a collective action. He, in fact, was opposed to the agitations. His mobilisation of farmers was in the form of carving out an electoral base for himself among the middle and backward caste peasants like Jats, Yadavs, Kurmies, Kories, Lodhs, etc of UP. He did so while he was still a member of the Congress. He adopted two-pronged policy for this purpose: first, he articulated the interests of the peasant proprietors; second, he identified himself with the backward caste peasantry. Largely both these groups—backward castes and the peasant proprietors overlapped. This created resentment within the Congress about Charan Singh's attempt to carve base for himself even while he was its member. At an opportune time, following the defeat of Congress in 1967 election in nine states, Charan Singh came out of Congress to form his own party — the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD). After the decline of the mobilisation by the socialist and the communist, as mentioned earlier unlike when he was in the Congress even Charan Singh's party mobilised farmers into agitational politics. But it was not as regular and organised as the mobilisation by the socialists and the communists. Having consolidated his base among the middle caste peasants Charan Singh changed his focus to state and nation politics which catapulted him to the post of Prime Minister in 1980.

The principal issue of the mobilisation was related to cane price, though other issues also mattered. Therefore, the peasant movement in UP was basically sugar cane growers' movements (Jagpal Singh, pp. 87-92). A comparison of these issues with the issues taken up by the farmers movements of the later period shows that were almost same. However, there was a the difference; the socialists and communists took them up before the impact of the green revolution was actually felt, while the BKU took them up after the impact of the green revolution had been realised. Opening up sugar mills in different parts of Uttar Pradesh in the 1930s not only encouraged the commercialisation of cropping pattern, it also gave rise to the new issues like the sugar cane growers problems. The peasant mobilisation on these issues took place during the pre-Independence period also, but it was during the 1950s-1960s that the socialists and the communists mobilised them regularly.

Problems of the sugarcane growers, some of which exist even today, were the following: the sugar cane growers would supply the sugar cane to the sugar mills, payment for which was supposed to made later on; the sugar mills did not mention the price of the sugar cane on the receipt of the sugar cane from the farmers; rampant corruption at the

“centres”, the distant places connecting with mills, where sugar cane would be supplied. The problem was compounded by the fact that the price of the sugar cane was not provided to the farmers on time. It was also not paid in full; it was paid in installments. Therefore, the major demands during the peasant movements of the 1950s-1960s included regular, timely and full (not in installments) payment of the price of the sugar cane to the cane growers.

Through out the 1950s and 1960s the sugar cane growers were mobilised by the socialists and communists during the months of December and March - the peak season for sugar cane harvesting under the banners of organisations like *Hind Kisan Panchayat* and *Kisan Sabha*. They resorted to organising rallies, *dharnas* at the mill gates, conferences of the peasants, etc. Apart from the local leaders, the national and state level leaders like Acharaya J. B. Kripali, A. K. Gopalan, E. M. S. Naboodaripad, Z. A. Ahmed, Gainda Singh and Dada Dharamdhikari visited UP in order to mobilise sugar cane growers. Sometimes this resulted in scuffle between the cane growers and “agents” of the mill owners, and arrest of the leaders of the movement and foisting of charges on them. Towards the end of the 1960s, the leaders of these movement either joined Congress, Charan Singh’s party or became inactive and a phase in the peasant movement came to an end. As you noticed in this unit earlier the peasant mobilisation was done in the coming decades by Charan Singh’s party and by the BKU headed by Tiakait.

13.5.3 Globalisation and Farmers’ Movements

Unlike the earlier movements those of the farmers in the era of globalisation have reacted to the issues related to globalisation. The attempt of the western countries, especially to interfere in the agrarian economy of the country, especially through the Dunkel Draft and GATT evoked different reactions from the farmers movement. While Sharad Joshi, the *Shetkari Sangathan* leader from Maharashtra supported the globalisation, two supported leaders Prof. Nanjudaswami of *Karntaka Rajya Rytha Sangha* and Mahendra Singh Tikait of BKU in UP opposed it. Sharad Joshi argued that the opening of Indian agriculture to the world competition would benefit Indian farmers. His perspective helped him to become an advisor to the Government of India during the regime of V. P. Singh. The opponents of globalisation Nanjudaswami and Tikait got support of academic activist like Vandana Shiva and a large number of the socialist and Gandhians. They argued that that globalisation would not only expose the Indian farmers to the unequal competition with the European farmers, an attempt to change the patent laws about seeds would deprive them of their traditional rights over the preservation and generation of seeds. They opposed the attempt of the government to change the patent laws, demanded abrogation of the subsidies given by the European governments to their farmers. They also opposed the Multinational Companies which used Indian natural resources like water to manufacture soft drinks. In fact, intellectuals like Vandana Shiva argue that modern technology popularised in green revolution has harmed the fertility of land rather than helping it. The opponents of the globalisation organise rallies, demonstration and seminars to register their protest. Following the death of Prof. Nanjudaswami the farmers protest against globalisation has got weakened.

13.6 SUMMARY

To sum up, there have been the movements of agrarian classes in India through out the pre and post-Independence periods. Different agrarian classes have been mobilised into

collective actions on their respective issues, by their respective leaderships and organisations. In the pre-green revolution era the traditional Marxists (CPI and CPM), socialists and Naxalites launched agrarian movements in different parts of the country. The issue during that period included land reforms, and wages for the poorer classes, and prices of the produce and making available the infrastructure in the agriculture. Unlike other political organisations, the Naxalites were able to combine the economic exploitation with social justice. The post-green revolution saw the rise of the movements of kulaks or rich peasants in the prosperous regions of the country, which had benefited from the green revolution. Some scholars call them new social movements. Their characteristics were: “apolitical nature”, based on the rural-urban divide, concerned with the issues of commercial economy in agriculture, with new mode of mobilisation and new type of leadership. However, some scholars disagree with the attribution of these characteristics to these movements. Even the globalisation evoked contradictory responses from the leadership of these organisations. This period has also seen the rise of alternative mobilisation of the rural poor which saw the participation of the civil society organisations and intellectual activists.

13.7 EXERCISES

- 1) How can you differentiate within the agrarian society?
- 2) Write a note on the peasant movements in the pre-Independence period.
- 3) Compare the characteristics of movements of the rural poor with those of the rich peasants.
- 4) Write a note on the farmers movements of the post-Independence period.
- 5) How did the farmers movements react to the globalisation? Discuss.