

7th Standard- Social Science

Civics- Struggle for Equality

The Indian Constitution recognizes all Indians are equal before the law and states that no person discriminated against because of their religion, sex, caste, or whether they re rich or poor.

All adults in India have equal rights to vote during elections, and this 'power over the ballot box' has been used by people to elect or replace their representatives for many years.

However the feeling of equality on the basis of 'one vote one person' in reality does not extend to Poor people face negligence and these people do not get justice in matters of health, education, etc.

Domestic helpers, small farmers, and many others are forced to work in hardships due to poverty a shortage of resources.

People also face inequality on grounds of religion, caste, and gender in India.

Struggles for Equality

- Poverty and discrimination have created inequalities in our society.
- Throughout the world, people are fighting for their rights and equality, trying to end the discriminator which they face.
- Women's struggle and movements for equality was one such group fighting for equality.

- The Tawa Matsya Sangh in Madhya Pradesh is also an example of people coming together to fight an issue.
- There are many other struggles such as those of beedi workers, fishermen, agricultural laborers, si dwellers, etc. who have been fighting for equality and justice.

Tawa Matsya Sangh (TMS)

- It is a federation of fishermen's cooperatives that fights for the rights of forest dwellers who have been displaced from Satpura forest located in Madhya Pradesh.
- With the beginning of the construction of Tawa Dam in 1958 till its completion in 1978, large parts of the forest and agricultural areas were submerged. Thus, the forest dwellers had to suffer a setback as they earned very little.
- The government gave rights for fishing in the Tawa reservoir but to only private contractors in 1994.
- When the contractors started exploiting the poor villagers, they came together to form a union and set up an organization to protect their rights, which was called Tawa Matsya Sangh.
- Rallies and Chakka jam were organized time and again. In response, the government granted fishing rights to the villagers in 1996.
- With the TMS taking over the fishery workers were able to increase their earnings substantially.

The Indian Constitution as a Living Document

- The foundation of all movements for justice and the inspiration for all the poetry and songs on equals is the recognition that all people are equal.
- Movements and struggle for equality in India promote equality.
- Indian constitution is a living document recognizing greater equality on existing and other issues.
- It guarantees dignity, self-respect, and equality, all of which are required in a democracy.

India is a democracy and the soul of democracy is equality. But we do not see equality at any place except on the polling day on which every adult citizen of India enjoys the equal right to vote.

Right from the beginning of the chapter, we have been introduced to persons like Kanta, Ansari, Swapna, Melani, and so on. These people have to face discriminations because they lack resources.

Under such circumstances, some people take initiative and start struggles for equality. Others extend their support for the cause.

In India, there are several struggles in which people have come together to fight for issues that they believe are important. The methods used by the women's movement to raise issues of equality can be mentioned here. Another example can be given of the Tawa Matsya Sangh in which people came together to fight for an issue.

The Tawa Matsya Sangh is an organization fighting for the rights of the displaced forest dwellers of Salpura forest in Madhya Pradesh.

The Tawa dam began to be built in 1958 and was completed in 1978. It submerged large areas of forest and agricultural land. The forest dwellers were left with nothing. Some of the displaced people began fishing in the reservoir.

In 1994, the government gave the rights for fishing in the Tawa reservoir to private contractors. These contractors were not friendly. They began to push out the local people.

The villagers now stood united and set up Tawa Matsya Sangh (TMS) to protect their rights.

The TMS organized rallies and a chakka jam demanding their right to continue fishing for livelihood.

Finally, the government accepted their demand and from Jan. 2, 1997 they began fishing.

Later on, the TMS set up a cooperative which would buy the catch from the fishworkers at a fair price. Now, they were able to earn three times more than they earned earlier.

The TMS has also begun giving the Fishworkers loans for repair and the buying of new nets.

In a democracy, there are always communities and individuals trying to expand the idea of democracy and push for greater recognition of equality on existing as well as new issues. Thus, issues of equality are central to democracy.

The dignity and self-respect of each person can only be realized if he/she has adequate resources.

Reservoir: An artificial lake where water is collected and kept in quantity for use.

Dam: A dam is built across a river at sites where one can collect a lot of water.

TMS: Tawa Matsya Sangh is an organization fighting for the rights of the displaced forest dwellers of the Salpura forest in Madhya Pradesh.

Contractor: One that contracts to perform work or provide supplies.

Creative Expression: Writers, singers, dancers, and artists have also been active against inequality. They use their pen or their voice or their ability to dance to draw attention to issues of inequality. This is known as creative expression.