

PREFACE

Since Independence, Indian political system has been witnessing a number of protests, agitations and movements. These protest movements seem to be rooted in the broad theoretical framework - the theory of relative deprivation. The assumption of this theoretical frame that is brought to explain the protest movements in general is that if a section of the people of a society finds reason to feel relatively deprived it resorts to protests to redress the alleged deprivation. However, it should be noted in this connection that not always the deprivation syndrome of the common people acts as the root cause of protests and movements. Rather it is noticeable that it is the perceived deprivation of the few - the leadership that brings about protests and movements in the name of the deprivation of the common masses by mobilizing and organizing the otherwise passive common people for subserving the narrow interests of the leadership who are, for one reason or the other, deprived of the sharing of power but wants to be around the helms of power. And thus, when the leadership cannot come near the power centre by the available legitimate means they resort to the mobilization and organization of the passive common masses as if they are deprived of the share of the benefits of the society, polity and the economy. These are the two broad theoretical frameworks which are involved to explain the roots of protest movements in general and their organizational, functional and behavioural aspects. The protest movements that are being witnessed in India over the decades can also be explained by these two broad theoretical frameworks.

The protest movements in India have been of different types, goals, strategies, mobilization and leadership with the aims of expressing dissent from conditions of powerlessness, injustice or loss of identity and seeking various remedial empowerments and entitlements. As such, these movements have influenced and tend to influence the working of the Indian political system in many ways - from the perceived positive

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contribution to the strengthening of the system to the other extreme pole of feared disintegration of the system. Thus, there has been a number of viewpoints that question the very legitimacy and rationality of these protest movements in a parliamentary democracy like India where the Constitution contains the necessary remedial measures for the grievances.

Given this background, the present dissertation seeks to explore and find out the overall impact of the various protest movements in India on the political process in general and the nation-building, federal polity and governance in particular. The dissertation, by exploring the roots of the protest movements in India, seeks to identify the different contradictions of the Indian society that act as the breeding grounds of the protest movements. The study also endeavours to analyse the types, ideology, leadership and mobilization pattern of the protest movements in India to evaluate the impact of these protest movements on the Indian political system and the process.

The dissertation has been divided into five broad chapters, covering the specific dimensions of the study. Chapter I introduces the study with a statement of the problem that has been probed, a broad theoretical framework, the specific objectives of the study and an overview of surveyed literature on the subject of research. Chapter 2 analyses the contradictions of different types of the Indian society that are supposed to be the roots of dissent and protest. In chapter 3, a detailed discussion of various protest movements in India has been made in its historical perspective. Chapter 4 provides analysis of Indian protest movements with their specific dimensions like analysis of types, ideology, leadership and mobilization pattern of protest movements in India. Chapter 5, the concluding chapter, analyses and evaluates the overall impact of the protest movements on the Indian political system and the process.