

CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND ISSUES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Change is a social fact and is universal phenomenon. Social system evolves its own mechanism to resolve the conflicts. When this mechanism becomes fragile and the unsatisfied group organize themselves on the basis of certain principles, ideals and program of action with an aim to bring change in the existing system. This process of organization gives birth to a movement. This research article based on content analysis, focuses on conceptual understanding of and issues pertaining to social movement in India.

Keywords: *Relative Deprivation, Social Movement, Social Mobility, Social Conflict, Collective Mobilization.*

Introduction

Social movements are a product of the social structure and hence emerge out of certain conditions in the social structure. Social movements have consequences for the social structure (Mukherji, 2012). According to Heberle(1951), the belief system that underlines social mobilizations is an expression of collective will of the participants. Movements are viewed essentially as adaptive mechanisms in a period of rapid change and with adaptation change is institutionalized (Smelser, 1962). Neil J. Smelser, thus integrates his typology of social movement with Parsonian perspective as the functions of collective behaviour are the primacy of value orientation followed by the normative, goal attainment and adaptive functions. According to Oommen (2012), change can be viewed in terms of three basic processes i.e. structural differentiation, reintegration and adaptation. In this sequential model of change, a movement may appear in any one of the stages depending upon certain system conditions. He further says that social movements are mechanisms through which men attempt to move from the periphery of the system to its centre in order to reduce the feeling of derivation and secure justice.

Today among Indian sociologists and social psychologists the interest in the study social movements is increasing. Dhanagare(2007) is of the view that regarding social movement, the historical method has comparatively and greatly been employed by sociologists like A.R. Desai, I. P. Desai, M.S.A. Rao, T.K. Oommen, P.N. Mukherji, R.C. Guha, Rajendra Singh, Pushendra Surana and D.N. Dhanagare himself.

In case of India, several approaches and theories have been constructed on social movement which can be tabulated as below-

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S. No.	Approach	Social Thinkers
1.	Political Opportunities Approach	Meyer(2004), Tarrow(2011).
2.	Subaltern Approach	Guha(1982), Amin(1982), Chatterjee(2012).
3.	Ethnographic Approach	Dhanagare(2013), Touraine(1981).
4.	Resource Mobilization Approach	Jenkins(1985), McCarthy and Zaid(1993), Gamson(1975), Giugni(2004), McAdam(1996).
5.	populist Approach	Taggart (2002).
6.	Assemblage Approach	De Landa(2006), Srnicek(2007), Anderson and McFarlane(2011), Kumar(2013).
7.	New Social Movement Approach	Omvedt(1993), Oommen (2001), Pattnaik (2011), D'monte (1989), Frank and Fuentes(1987),Dhanagare(2013).

The name of *M.S.A. Rao*(1984) is on pinnacle in the study of social movement. In his article '*Conceptual Problems in the Study of Social Movement*,' he presented his views regarding social movements and the problems which are confronted in its sociological study are as follows-

- Problem of definition and classification.
- Problem regarding emergence of social movement.
- Problem regarding its determination and the construction of its views.
- Problem of collective/group mobility, organization, leadership, internal mobility and regularization.
- Problem of changes in vast society and nature of their consequences.

Problems of Definition and Classification of Social Movement

There is a considerable agreement among the sociologists on two chief features of social movement i.e. collective mobilization and change orientation. 'But if sustainability as a process is taken as a crucial factor in a movement, its two other distinct elements are ideology and organization' (*Karna*, 2016). *M.S.A. Rao* (1984) presented his view regarding definition, meaning and characteristics. According to him there are two basic features of a social movement i.e.

- **Collective Mobilization**

In a social movement, there is a presence of collective mobilization. It is not based on individual action but on collective action. It is not necessary that collective action should be organized but it should have ability to create collective awareness among the mob. According to *Rao* (1972), a backward caste organizes itself on a national scale by forming associations for the following reasons:

- Effective competition with upper caste with regard to sharing of power.
- Checking exploitative bania for denying them a fair price for their products.
- Pressurizing the government for establishing a regiment in the army of its caste members.
- Providing facilities of modern education, employment, etc.

The *Yadav Mahasabha* is a good example according to him.

- **Change Oriented**

Social movement demands complete or partial change in the norms, values and relations of the existing system(*Rao*,1984). Therefore, according to per him:

Social Movement → **Collective Mobilization + Change Orientation**

But different scholars have different opinions regarding social movement. For them its characteristics also include-Presence of ideology, Methods of the organization, Nature of the results, and Relevancy. According to *Mukherji*(2012), "Social movements are related to social change and therefore to the social structure. But it is not so that social movement is necessary conditions for social change rather social change can take place independently of social movements through the operating of impersonal forces and factors. Social movement is not always change promoting, it can be, equally change resisting." *Oommen* (2012) has emphasized on both the mobilization and institutionalization aspect of social movement. To him, the movements are conditioned by socio-structural factors and are the mechanism through which the deprived categories try to demonstrate their power.

- **Ideology**

Rao (1984) says, "I believe ideology to be an important part of the social movement, because it gives different recognition to a social movement which comprise of collective mobilization and change orientation." For example, strike by the students may not be called social movement unless it is supported by an ideology. After then only that becomes a student movement.

- **Relevancy**

A social movement is a movement so long it has its relevancy. For example, if any movement is changed into a political party then the efforts initiated for social change do not fall under the category of a social movement.

Classification of Social Movement

Classification helps us in knowing the salient features of a social movement. It does reflect light on its origin, development, mobility and its results. According to Rao(1984), in classification of any social movement, ideology and its results are considered important in analyzing its nature and area. Locus classification helps us in knowing the class of the society involved in any movement whereas ideology and results throw light on the descriptive part of the social movement. To classify and categorize social movements is another problem for the scholars. Movements assume different forms and involve different strategies to meet their objectives. Following are the basis for the classification of social movement:

On Basis of Results: Rao (1984) has classified social movement on the basis of results i.e.

Reformative Movements

Such movements aim at bringing partial change in the value system and also resultant changes in the quality of relationships.

- **Transformative movements**

They aim at seeking medium level structural transformation in the traditional distribution of power.

- **Revolutionary movements**

Such movements bring radical change in the total socio-cultural systems.

- **On Basis of Locus:** On the basis of locus, the social movements can be linguistic, religious, caste, peasants, artisans, tribal, women, students, etc.
- **On Basis of Scale and Spatial Range:** On basis of scale and geographical area, a social movement can be national, regional/provincial, and local.
- **On Basis of Intended Change:** On the basis of intended change, Mukherjee (1984) advocated three types of movements i.e.

- **Social Movement:** Any collective mobilization is directed towards changing the structure of a system then it is called as social movement.

- **Revolutionary Movement:** If the collective mobilization aims at bringing far reaching and wide ranging change in the chief institutions comprising the whole society is termed as revolutionary movement.

- **Quasi Movement:** If the movement is aimed at bringing partial changes within a system then it is understood as quasi- movement.

David Aberle (1966) after his study of *Americas Navaho Indians* categorized social movements into four parts i.e. reformative, transformative, redemptive and alternative. While Herbert Blumer (1969) categorizes social movements into three types, which are: General social movements, Specific social movements and Expressive social movements. *General social movements* are slow but persistent, unorganized without any established leadership and recognition; *Specific social movements* have well defined objectives, recognized leadership and which seeks to reach goals through collective consciousness, examples are revolutionary and reform movements; and expressive social movements do not seek to transform the social order or any institution, examples are religious and fashion movements.

According to Mukherji(2012), the difference between a social movement and a revolution is one of scale though they are structurally same. The origins of a revolutionary movement logically can be traced from its quasi movement stage, to the social movement stage, to its revolutionary stage. These

three phenomenons should be understood in terms of a hierarchy of controls. A revolution subsumes social movements and quasi movements, and social movements subsume quasi movements.

- **On Basis of Crystallization, Life- cycle and Phases of Social Movement:** On basis of these criterion, *T.K. Oommen* (1977) has classified social movements as:

- Charismatic
- Ideological
- Organizational

Rajendra Singh (2001) has categorized the studies on social movement broadly under three parts i.e.

- **Classical:** Studies by *Western Socio-Psychologists* and *Historians* related to collective behaviour of crowds, rebellions and riot groups.
- **Neo Classical:** Studies by *Marxists* and *Functionalists* on movements, mainly after 1950s.
- **New Social Movements:** Studies by *European* and *American* scholars who worked on new social movement (NSM) theory.

Genesis of Social Movement

Rao (1984) says that another problem that arises regarding the study of social movement is the genesis of the social movement. So, the questions which arise are:

- What are the social conditions that are responsible for its genesis?
- Which are the inspiring factors behind it?
- What are the principles underlying the theoretical aspect for its genesis?
- Up to what extent they are desirable?

Rao(1984) gave three theories regarding the emergence of social movements describing the structural conditions and inspiring factors behind them which are as follows:

- Relative Derivation Theory
- Strain Theory
- Revitalization Theory

Relative Derivation Theory

Rao(1984) tried to make understand the concept of social movement in the terms of relative deprivation. Deprivation emerges in the following sense:

Social Mobility

Robert Merton has propounded the concept of 'Reference group' in this regard. *Runciman* later followed the footprints of Merton and analyzed social mobility in the terms of reference group, inequalities and social justice. In this way social derivation become the base for the study of social mobility.

Social Conflict

Marx and *Aberle* emphasized on social conflict and development. Regarding social deprivation they said that the case of conflict not only occurs due to dissatisfaction with status quo but also with the relative expectation. *Aberle* defines derivation in terms of inverse result between expectation and reality. In 1970, *Gurr* used expectation as perceived capabilities. He defined deprivation in terms of the difference between the expectation and perceived capabilities. He describes three conditions that lead to deprivation:

	Capabilities	Expectation
Detrimental Derivation	↓	↑
Progressive Deprivation	↓	↑
Aspirational Deprivation	Static	↑

But scholars have believed that deprivation is not the only factor that is responsible for the genesis of social movement. *Ghanshyam Shah* (1979) and *T.K. Oommen* (1977) have criticized this theory.

- **Strain Theory**

Smelser(1962) propounded this theory. He advocated that the structural strain is there, responsible for the collective behaviour. Structural strain can occur at various levels of norms, values, mobility and conditional facilities. He says that it is in structural functional system that social movement originates. It is the defects of the system that cause strain.

- **Theory of Revitalization**

Wallace has propounded the theory of revitalization. He rejects that the deprivation or strain is the main factor behind the genesis of social movement. He says that people deliberately, in an organized way and with an aware effort, brings social movement for the creation of more satisfying culture. He described four stages of movement for revitalization, which are follows:

- Period of cultural stability.
- Period of increasing individual pressure or stress.
- Period of cultural distortion and negative results.
- Revitalization period.

To bring equilibrium and amend the situation accordingly is called as revitalization. It reflect the positive course of social movement i.e. protest and reform. *Rao* found the derivation theory more appropriate because it is motivated by the conflict and change and also emphasizes people's mobility for certain interests and goals.

Ideology and Identity

According to *M.S.A. Rao*, another problem with regard to social movement is identification of group and its ideology. Ideology is also an important element of social movement. Because it organizes and codifies beliefs, myths and values; defines expectations and interests; directs reactions or responses for any specific social status.

Leaders of any movement work on their ideas and goals. By doing so, they gain respect and improve their personality. The example is *backward class movement*. *Yadav movement* was the movement for the emancipation of Yadavs and forrising in the caste hierarchy. *DMK movement* opposed Aryan culture and claimed that Dravidian culture was full of values. While *Mahar movement* attacked on the evils of Hindu religion and gave importance to Buddhism. *Dalit panther movement* was against the evils of the caste system in Hindu society. It was on the line of class struggle of Karl Marx. *Kisan movement* and *Labour movement* were on the line of class struggle but later they aligned with one or other political party.

One important aspect of ideology based on relative deprivation is to get identified in relation to other groups. Deprived group criticize and attack the privileges like socio-economic, political, religious and educational, possessed by the rival group through social movement. The deprived group not only try to minimize the facilities availed by higher caste or class but they also want to possess such facilities through conflict with them. In kerela, *Shri Narayan Dharma paripalna movement* was to attack the monopoly of Brahmins but at the same time they created parallel religious institutions as of Brahmins.

Collective Mobilization, Organization and Leadership

Collective mobilization is not only concerned with ideology but it is also concerned with leadership and the nature of organization. Whenever any organization of social movement becomes formal and rigid and starts acquiring property then it starts disintegrating. There are three types of disintegration patterns of social movement:

- Individual rivalry
- Differences on ideology
- Differences on complementary thought

With above these patterns of disintegration, the social movement becomes a process. A rival movement may come up with revolutionary ideas but in due course of time it develops with new systematic organization. As a result either a social movement got its natural death or remains dormant for sometime or again emerge with new interests and vigour or the rival groups develop within the organization.

Social Consequences and Change

In every social movement, there are problems related to its emergence, ideology, collective mobilization and leadership. Results of any social movement are more concerned with organization, interest and ideology than with structural conditions. According to *Arbele*, a relation can establish between social context of the derived group and the nature of movement based on results. In this context, one can find conditions like reaction of rival group and trade politics. Any movement brings reform and social change in the group and then in society. *Rajput Mahasabha*, *Sanatan Dharm Sabha*, *Brahmin Sabha*, etc. are the results of social movements which wanted drastic change in society. Rajputs, Brahmins and Vaishyas organized them into sabhas to bring reform in outdated customary practices of their communities. For examples, when the plan to abolish privileges of the princes by the government was going on *Akhil Bhartiya Kshtriya Mahasabha* was formed to protect the privileges of princes.

Collective mobilization of derived group works for bringing the reform and social change while collective mobilization of rival group works to maintain the status quo. In this regard, three forms of change can be seen as a result of any social change i.e.

- Social Reform
- Social Change
- Social Revolution

Social Reform

Social reform aims essentially at change, a change that may sometimes involve the basic values of social institutions in a community. Thus, it is directed towards changing the social institutions and pattern of life of whole community.

Social Change

Jones defined social change as a term used to describe variations in, or modifications of, any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interaction or social organization. A change is a variation from a previous state or mode of existence. Thus, there are three things which are essential for a change as follows:

- Object-There must be an object or subject.
- Time-Now and then, e.g. present time and British time.
- Variations-There must be some variations in an object or subject.

This aims at bringing structural change in privileges, rights and resources enjoyed by high class society or higher castes. Intensity of these movements is more than the intensity of reformative movements.

Social Revolution

Revolution expresses causality and quickness of change. In revolution, sequence of development breaks and sudden changes takes place. In modern times, we talk of political revolutions, for e.g. in Pakistan, the takeover of power by *General Musrif* is a political revolution. *Hopper* in his book *Revolutionary process* said that a social revolution is that sudden change in which the political institutions correlating persons with each other breaks down. Social and moral values also get destroyed. Institutions like state, family, school, etc. change drastically. These movements are more concerned to bring complete and drastic change in social and cultural system. The changes come with the use of violence. These are the results of planned ideology of some political parties. *Revolution of China* and *Russia* can be put under such kind of movement.

Thus, change is a social fact and is a universal phenomenon. It is a variation from a previous state or mode of existence and it can have three forms i.e. social revolution, social reform or social change.

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