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INTRODUCTION

Human society has been evolving since time immemorial. In different eras of history, the concern for social movements along with the methodology adopted has been different. This holds true even for social movements which have seen a marked difference since the older times. Hence, there has been bifurcation of the social movements into old and new social movements.

MEANING OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

New social movements are those movements that were organised with new sections of populations such as dalits, other backward classes, women around new issues such as caste, gender, environment, production for the market or oppression by the state (Omvedt, 2002; Porta & Diani, 2006) that became more prominent when the new world began to emerge. This probably provides a scope for studying the self-determination movement under the New Social Movement. T.K. Oommen (2010) presented eight salient features of New social movements. Here, the participants are structurally diffused and transcend all diverse social backgrounds. Unlike Old Social Movements that have specific ideologies to which participants are strongly committed, New Social Movements are marked by diverse ideas and values. Identities are engendered. What is new about New Social Movements is difficult to be made simple. However, proponents of New Social Movements (Inglehart, 1981, 1990; Melucci, 1980, 1989; Offe, 1985; Touraine, 1981) emphasised on the emergence of new collective identities as the most indispensable defining factor of New Social Movements (McAdam, 1994). The new social movement perspective holds that the collective search for identity is a central aspect of movement formation (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1994). New social movements are said to arise "in defense of identity" (Melucci, 1980, p. 218, cited in Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1994, p. 10). The relevance of new forms of collective action or New Social Movements in industrial countries is evident from the delegitimation of major political parties and greater support for parties working with these movements in Europe at the end of the 1980s. There was an inability to understand these movements clearly within the European or American traditional framework of analysis (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1994). New Social Movement theorists contended that changes in industrial societies herald a 'new historical epoch' that contributes to identities (Pizzorno, 1978, Habermas, 1984, 1987, Cohen, 1985, Gamson, 1989, Kriesi, 1989, Dalton & Kuechler, 1990, cited in Hunt, Benford & Snow, 1994, p. 188). However, Hunt and Benford (1994, cited in Valocchi, 2007, p. 191) asserted that collective identity, and the participation, commitment, and solidarity are results of social interaction. Thus, Hunt and Benford acknowledged the role of individuals and accepted the significance of rational human interaction. Issues which interest New Social Movements include even personal and intimate aspects of life. They resort to radical mobilisation tactics of disruption and resistance. Unlike the 'cadre-led and centralized bureaucracies' typical with traditional mass parties, the organisations of new social movements are more segmented, diffused, and decentralised (Johnston, Larana & Gusfield, 1994, p. 8). Citing Gail Omvedt (1993) and T.K. Oommen (2001), T.K. Oommen (2010: 38) held the view that the term New Social Movement is not relevant in the Indian context as it is different from the Western context. This is so because in certain Indian society inequality is legitimised and institutionalised by tradition (Oommen, 2010). Such observation may be

made in casteism.

FEATURES AND NATURE OF NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The modern social movements comprise of a complex network of actors and interactions in a structured fashion involving a three step strategy which included:

- Diagnosis
- Prognosis
- Motivation

The aims and objectives of the actors who organise social movements must be made crystal clear by way of the process of 'diagnosis,' i.e., putting into words what's wrong with the society. The question then is to figure out ways to rectify the wrongs in the society. The next obvious issue is to figure out the peoples' contribution to effect the changes by the process of 'motivation.' This is done in specific narratives or interpretive packages aimed at authorities, movement participants, supporters and at the public at large. The people at the helm of social movements perform critical roles in the process by giving meaning to events, situations and social practices. Besides these they act as agents of change alongside other actors such as the government agencies and the media as well. It is expected that these social changes alter the existing power structures and dwell on the values of freedom, equality and justice by adding new paradigms to them. In other words, these New Social Movements strive to affect those at the grassroots level by bringing about a political societal transformation. The actors of New Social Movements do not have the will for holding state power. This is called 'de-politicisation' of the social realm. It is important to note that the New Social Movements are not only social in nature but also have economic and political dimensions too. Furthermore, it is also imperative to add that such movements may not necessarily involve the grassroots level.

There are several reasons which have been attributed for the rise of new social movements. These include democracy, mass education, communication technology, urbanisation and industrialisation. They are briefly discussed hereunder:

1. **Democracy:** Social movements benefitted greatly with the spread of democracy and political rights. Social movements became much easier owing to the peoples' freedom to right to speech, right to organize freely sans any state imposed curbs. Letting people discuss issues freely led to the development of forums of free expression.
2. **Mass education:** Social movements received greater impetus owing to the en masse education of people as several movements were born at educational institutions such as universities as education unified and bound people together.
3. **Communication technologies:** The development of social movements got a great impetus with the development of new communication technologies. These make creation and activation of social activities easier as it became to reach out to the larger masses by way of pamphlets in the mid eighteenth century. In more recent times it is the newspaper, the radio and the television media and the internet today that aid the spread of new social movements.
4. **Urbanisation:** This led to a marked increase in the size of cities where people migrated from the surrounding countryside. This migration and resettlement led to increased interactions among people of similar interests. People met freely, organised and gathered to address common issues. Thus, these new urban areas proved to augur well for the development of New Social Movements.

5. **Industrialization:** The process of industrialization which gathered large masses of workers in the same region explains why many of those early social movements addressed matters such as economic well being, important to the worker class.

The Gandhian principles of action offer an alternate structure by underlining social harmony, nonviolence, ethical and moral values of action and discarding the Euro-centric view of development and more precisely the Western science and technology. It is possible to differentiate two distinct theories of the Gandhian approach to social action – Constructivist and Sarvodaite. While the constructivist approach has encouraged development oriented social action groups, the Sarvodaite approach has enthused struggle oriented social action groups. The Constructivists have faith in the concept of self- sufficiency of villages which can be achieved by greater prosperity which in turn can be attained by implementing various developmental programmes. They consider the state as their associate in this work and believe that the state can be instrumental in the upliftment of the grassroots level people. A combined effort is thus always desirable. They are regarded as efforts to open alternate political spaces outside the normal arena of party and government, though not outside the state. Somewhat these new systems of organisation and uprising are destined to revitalise the state and to make it once again a tool of liberation from unfair structures in which the disadvantaged and poor are confined. The influence of Gandhi on the New Social Movements has been noteworthy. Gandhian impacts can be traced to several significant civic endeavours, movements and organisation around third world liberation, international solidarity, peace and nonviolence, environment and democracy. The impact of Gandhian and popular uprisings in India on other societies is of global attention. The independence struggle of India set an example for the whole of the colonised world. The dominant question in the struggles was the means especially the role of armed struggles. Gandhi talked about these issues in his book *Inswaraj* in 1909 adopting extremely strong views against violence and for ahimsa. Inspired by his encounters with Satyagraha in South Africa, he was able to sketch the basic elements of the active nonviolent struggles. The notions and practices of the support groups stimulated by Gandhi for the Independence of India, acted as a model for forthcoming solidarity movements for the transition of South Africa from apartheid to democracy. The Gandhian freedom struggle based on the principles of nonviolence encouraged several Europeans and involved them in various support action events. Post Second World War and India's Independence, the success of the Gandhian approaches to nonviolence and ahimsa found their way into the European corridors of politics and social movements. There was a participation of masses in the new popular movements owing to four Gandhian and Indian inspirations which were being emulated on a large scale.

These four inspirations were:

- Intervention by direct nonviolent interventions and conflicts.
- Boycott against despotic rules.
- Public support for constructive programmes to provide humanitarian support.
- Long marches or Padyatras connected to direct actions.

Liberal Approach New Social Movements

The liberal approach views the new social movements as a part of the larger freedom project. The individual and his groups demand larger autonomy and liberty. According to the liberal approach most of the modern social movements are directed to claim for rights and social goods. The target of the movements are the state which is being criticized for being ineffective or unattentive to citizen needs. Democracy is another focal point of these movements. The demand is for better deliberations and democratic environments. The

liberal thinkers argue that these movements are a sign of the ineffectiveness in the democratic mechanism. It can be well settled with effective institutional structures. Many of these modern movements thus seem to be reformative demands.

Marxist view: Marxism as an ideology and theory of social change has had an immense impact on the practice and the analysis of social movements. Marxism arose from an analysis of movements structured by conflicts between industrial workers and their capitalist employers in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century a variety of neo-Marxist theories have been developed that have opened themselves to adding questions of race, gender, environment, and other issues to an analysis centred in political economic conditions. Marxist approaches have been and remain influential ways of understanding the role of political economy and class differences as key forces in many historical and current social movements, and they continue to challenge approaches that are limited by their inability to imagine serious alternatives to consumer capitalist social structures.

Postmodernism and social movement

In the eighteenth century, the Age of Enlightenment ushered in new ways of thinking in Europe and America. Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine and Voltaire sought to discard irrationality, superstition, and inherited dogmas with reason, science and rationality, and believed that systematic thinking should be applied to all spheres of human activity. Since then, many important intellectuals have accepted the basic values of the Enlightenment. These values represent “modernity” and form the basis of the rationalist scientific-technological outlook and the each-citizen-is-equal principles that lie at the foundation of the Western democracies. The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, lies very much in the Enlightenment tradition. Postmodernists denounce Enlightenment’s claim to universality. Postmodernists – like Ashis Nandy - hold that acceptance of Enlightenment ideas represents a “colonization of the mind”. They reject the idea that the spread of rationality and scientific temper are emancipatory, and instead argue for the preservation of “local knowledge systems” embedded in “traditional cosmologies”, religions, and traditional practices of agriculture, medicine, etc. The Postmodernists views new social movements as an arena of new identities against the fundamentals of enlightenment. To them many of these movements were attempts to break out from the colonization of mind and a trial to new emancipation. It happens in two directions. Firstly, many of these movements are locally organized to attend the immediate issues of the community. Secondly it misses the universality in ideology and action.

Distinguishing the New Social Movement from the Old Social Movement

From the discussion so far, it is observed that the historical contexts in which social movements took place were all different. There was a time when nationalist movements were overthrowing the colonial oppressors while the Working Class Movements in the capitalist West were struggling and wrestling for better living conditions, social security, free schooling and health security from the state. This was also a time when the socialist movements were establishing new kinds of states and societies. The central goal of the Old School Movements was the reorganisation of power relations and functioned within the framework of political parties. During India’s Freedom Struggle, the Indian National Congress led the freedom movement and China’s communist party led the Chinese Revolution. In today’s times some believe that the ‘old’ class-based political action led by trade unions and workers’ parties is on the decline. Others argued that in the affluent West with its welfare state, issues of class-based exploitation and inequality were no longer central concerns. Thus, it can be inferred that the New Social Movements were about quality-of-life issues such as a clean environment and not about changing the distribution of power in society.

Speaking about the Old Social Movements, political scientist Rajni Kothari attributes the surge of social movements in India in the 1970s to the peoples' growing dissatisfaction with parliamentary democracy. Kothari's contention was that the elites had captured the institution of the state and as a result of this, the electoral representation by political parties is no longer useful for the poor to get their voices heard. As a result, people who are left out of the benefits of the formal political system tend to join non-party political formations or social movements so as to put pressure on the state machinery from the outside.

Distinction between 'Old' and 'New' Social Movements

The Old and New Social Movements may be distinguished on the basis of certain elements which are discussed as under:

1. **Location:** The Old Social Movements typically revolved around politics and political parties, whereas, the New Social Movements have transcended these political limits and have become autonomous in nature.
2. **Aims:** Old Social Movements aim at securing political representation, legislative political reform and rights associated with citizenship in the political community, whereas the New Social Movements want to defend civil society against political power and redefine culture and lifestyle in civil society rather than pursuing legislative change through the state.
3. **Organisation:** The Old Social Movements are characterised by formal New Social Movements and hierarchical internal structures while the New Social Movements are characterised as being informal or unstructured organisations rather than structures of authority.
4. **Medium of change:** Old Social Movements are oriented towards political institutions through which change can be achieved. The New Social Movements go for newer and more innovative forms of direct action. They work on new redefinition of meaning and symbolic representation in culture rather than change through political apparatus. Rootes, Christopher (1999) notes that, "New Social Movements which emerged from the student movements of the late 1960s, it is environmental movements which have had most enduring influence on politics and which have undergone the most wide-ranging institutionalization in terms both of the professionalization of their activities and of the regularization of their access to policy-makers" (Rootes, Christopher 1999: 1). Nepal, Padam (2009) argues that, "the new social movements in India emerged because of the failure of the established oppositional forces in India's national politics, especially the left, and more particularly after the smashing of the Naxal movement, in giving direction and providing organization to the activity of the subaltern, marginal groups in the period characterized by the failure of the National Project and one-party dominance" (Nepal, Padam 2009: 98). The new social movements, including the environmental movements in India are studied in at least two different ways in India. In this context Nepal, Padam (2009) has pointed out: First, the leftist perspective which looks at the environmental movement as a displaced form of class struggle, and having its roots in the class-divided Indian society. The second perspective looks at the new social movements as struggles against the centralized state. This perspective although acknowledges the movement as a byproduct of class exploitation, yet it focuses on particular, issue-specific nature of the new social movements. A new social movement including the environmental movement has a dual aspect: general aspect in the sense that predominantly it represents a movement against omnipotent nature of the modern state to which the certain class of people fall a prey; and a particularistic aspect of addressing a specific, localized issue concerning a particular

social category like the women's issue, an environmental issue, issue of displacement of a tribal population from its natural habitation, etc.

Summary

- New social movements emerge around new scopes and range of politics. The environment, the rights, and role of women, health, food and nutrition, education, shelter and housing, the dispensation of justice, communications and the dissemination of information, culture and lifestyle, the achievement of peace and disarmament none of which were considered to be subject matter for politics in which ordinary people were involved, are major concerns for the new movements.
- The new movements have evolved an effective methodology of working with the disadvantaged sections of society which in turn has helped them to grow as an alternative agency of social change. This is a methodology of critical intervention, creative action and participatory mobilization. These groups make a critical intervention in the sense that they offer a critique of the micro mechanisms of domination and exploitation in which their clients, i.e., the underdogs in a locality, are involved.