UNIT 6 : SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

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6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the learner would be able to :

- Define and distinguish between social change and social movement and their features
- Explain the basis on which social change is classified, its sources and its different processes
- Explain and distinguish between types of social movement and different forms of movements

6.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit talks aboutthe conceptual categories of social change andsocial movement,different typologies used for their classification and the inter-connections between these various typologies. By defining the broader picture in which social change takes place, it attempts to provide the learner with an idea about how through collective intended actionmovements are formulated that bring about change within social practices and different institutions of society.

6.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CHANGE:

Change is an inevitable aspect of any society; it is the only unchanging phenomenon. However the study of social change as a social fact emerged with the establishment of sociology as a discipline in the mid nineteenth century.

While talking about social change it needs to be mentioned that any kind of change be does not fall under the purview of social change, rather it is only when certain significant change occurs that transforms the very foundations of anything or any structure, it can be considered as social change. As Giddens mentioned it is those changes which "alter the underlying structure of an object or situation over a period of time." Its effect is felt at a large scale in different sections of society influencing the modes of living of individuals and their inter-relationship. Therefore it is both intensive and extensive.

Social change can be classified according to its pace, its nature or impact in society, direction and source or causes. In terms of pace, it can be classified into evolutionary or revolutionary. Evolutionary change is a slow process that occurs over a long period of time. The term evolution is derived from Darwin's theory of evolution that proved how living organisms evolve by adapting to their natural surroundings. Though Darwin's theory was based on the natural world, it has been adopted by the social world to

study adaptive changes. Revolutionary change on the other hand refers to sudden changes in the society brought about by transformations due to changes in its political, social and economic structures. It might be a result of sudden change in the political structure due to the overthrow of ruling class like the Russian Revolution or change brought about because of transformation in mode of production due to introduction of technology like industrial revolution.

Change classified according to its nature or impact in society comprise of structural changes in the institutions functioning in society and changes in ideas, values and beliefs. Structural change is brought about by change in rules that govern the functioning of institutions in society. For instance: the introduction of the concept of paper money as a formof currency changed the nature of economic transactions giving rise to numerous institutions and transforming economic life. Change in values, ideas refers to change in norms of living and behaving with one another due to values and beliefs attached with a particular concept. For instance, the concept of childhood is a fairly recent phenomenon which emerged in the 19th century, before this, children were considered as young adults who worked to earn their living.



Structural change is brought about by change in rules that govern the social institutions.

6.4 SOURCES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Social change can be classified according to their sources or causes which can be categorized into four types: environment, technology and economy, politics and culture.

Environment: Environment, nature or ecology has shaped society and its structure, especially in the past, when the effects of nature couldn't be controlled or overcome. It had an impact on the food habits, clothes, social interaction, means to earn a livelihood, kind of houses that people lived in. But with the development of technology, its effect has been slowly decreasing as it enables us toovercome or adapt to nature, thus altering our relationship with nature.

It effects social change both constructively and destructively.

Constructively, the discovery of natural resources or the utilization of nature's abundance as a means of earning one's livelihoodhas transformed societies affecting their economic, social and political structure. For instance, the discovery of tea in Assam led to the establishment of numerous tea estates, creating the need for manpower and introducing a network of communications and transport, thereby changing the economic and social structure of the state.

Destructively, it causes social change during natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, volcanos. It not only cause physical destruction, but also changes the social fabric as people's livelihoods are dependent on natural resources. For instance, the yearly floods in Assam not only damage houses but also destroy crops causing loss to farmers.

Technology and economy: Developments in both technology and economy has been responsible for large scale social changes. As mentioned above, theforces of nature can be harnessed, resisted or controlled with the help of technology. Combined with the economic institution of market, it can create far reaching changes in the society, its culture and demography. The discovery of steam power transformed the transportation system by powering ships and railway engines; encouraging the establishment of networks of communication system thus changing the rules governing global economy. Certain technological inventions or discoveries may not have an immediate impact but once they have an enabling circumstance or a changed economic contest, their significancecan be felt. Like the discovery of writing paper in China which did not have much of an impact on its own but with the invention of printing press, it changed the face of society.

Change in economic organization also causes change in social and political structures. The introduction of tea plantation farming in Assam led to the forced migration of Adivasi people from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh changing Assamese society.

Politics: Political forces, that is, the actions of politically powerful people are one of the most important sources of social change as they not only represent individual action but rather reflect the political, social and economic trends. Along with this, conflict caused due to actions of political domination

like war, bring about social change; the conquered might influence the ways of life of the conquered or vice versa. For instance, the Mughals when they conquered the Indian Subcontinent, did not impose their religious faith on the Indian people rather they let them practice their own religion and culture but their impact can be felt in the areas of architecture, language, art and fashion. The transformation of political structures across the globe from monarchy to democracy and the introduction of universal adult franchise after a long struggle has slowly changed the norms of society. As it makes the people's political representatives answerable for their actions, it exerts considerable pressure on every government to work for the greater good rather than personal gain. This has had far reaching changesin society.

Culture: Culture refers to a wide area of ideas, beliefsand values encompassing a way of life that enable one to live life. According to E B Taylor, it includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, laws, etc and its transformations will lead to changes in society. For instance religion, an example of socio-cultural institution has had tremendous impact on society as religious beliefs help organize it. This is observed in Max Weber's study "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of capitalism" which proves how the religious beliefs advocated by certain sects of Protestant have helped in the spread of capitalism.

Therefore, it can be seen that there are various factors of social change, both internal and external. Also, these sources of change do not function in isolation rather they are inter-related with one another, technological sources may be affected by economic or environment and environment might affect culture. Hence it becomes necessary to understand the various forms and dimensions of change.

6.5 PROCESSES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The various processes of social change can be categorized under structural and cultural changes:

Industrialization:

With the advent of technology and establishment of large scale

industries, the process of industrialization has created a free market with a distinct class of entrepreneurs who control the means of production and employ workers to run their factories. The shift in focus from agriculture to industry-based economy has led to changes in social structure as well as inter-personal relationship. The institution of joint family has disintegrated and the role of women has also changed. This is mainly due to male members being forced to move out of rural areas in search of industry-based jobs to urban centres and women staying behind to look after the families.It has created a sense of alienation within the working population as a lot of individuals have moved away from their ancestral villages in the look-out for jobs.

Urbanisation:

Urbanisation generally refers to the process through which society is transformed from one that is predominantly rural, in economy, culture and life style, to one that is predominantly urban. Urbanisation as a concept is related to the process of development and growth of societies in urban centres due to large scale migration from rural areas.It brings about tremendous transformations in urban areas in terms of ideas, communication, infrastructure and innovation. However large-scale migration to cities has side effects like haphazard growth of slums, undue pressure on the city's resources which affect its social structure.



Urbanisation refers to transformations in terms of ideas, communication, infrastructure and innovation.

Sanskritisation:

The term 'sanskritisation' was first conceptualised by M.N. Srinivas to denote a form of upward movement of the lower castes. It refers to a process whereby people of lower caste trie to adopt practices, beliefs of an upper caste to acquire higher status in society. .

Srinivas writes that Sanskritisation refers to a process where a low caste is able to rise up to a higher position in the caste hierarchy by adopting the customs, rituals, rites and beliefs of the Brahman or any caste which is slightly higher in position to one's own caste. Its impact can be observed in the language, dance, music, literature, style of life. It has resulted in massive

transformations in an individual's social status along with his roles and responsibilities.

Westernisation:

M N Srinivas defined the term westernization as, "the changes brought about in Indian society and culture by 150 years of British rule,The process of westernisation brought in numerous social changes. It is often related with the coming of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels…. technology, institution, ideology and values." There are different kinds of Westernization: the first is the adoption of western ways of thinking or styles of life whose expansion was supported by a small section of Indians, for instance, the 19th century social reformers. In addition to this it also refers to the emergence of Western cultural traits like the use of technology, food, dress and general living habit and tastes which might involve imitation of "external forms of culture" but not internalization of its values. For instance an individual might adopt western method of dressing and behavior but might not believe in equality of all human beings.

Modernisation

The concept of modernization has been reduced to technological advancement or the process of development undertaken by the countries of Western Europe. Rather as Rudolph and Rudolph defines, "Modernity assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes, that the truths of calculation, utility and science take precedence over those of the emotions, the sacred and the non-rational, that the individual rather than the group be the primary unit of society and politics, that the associations men live and work be based on choice not birth…." Hence it implies that people are influenced by universal contexts and the individual emerges as the primary unit who determines what profession she would undertake according to her interests and achievement rather than on the basis of her parent's occupation.

In conclusion, it needs to be mentioned that these processes of social change might overlap or they might co-exist. Hence a person from an

industrialized society might appear to have western ideas on rationality but very traditional views on a marriage.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: Can any change in society be termed as social change?

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Q 2: What are the sources of social change?

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Q 3: List down the processes of social change.

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6.6 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Difference between social change and movement: Socialchange is a continuous and ongoing process; it is a historical process that encompasses both individual social action and collective action of social groups across time and space. On the other hand, social movements are directed towards achievement of specific objectives and have a minimum degree of organization. It involves collective action by its followers or members through an ongoing process of social effort.



Social movement refers to collective action to transform Social Structures or any oppressive social relationship.

Defining social movement: Social movement as an area of study in the social science emerged fairly recently when the role of masses in social transformation was recognized by historians, psychologists, political scientists and sociologists. Any form of collective action cannot be defined as social movement it is only when collective action aims to transform certain oppressive social relationships, only than it can be called as social

movement. As H Blumer says, it is only when an elementary collective action, "…acquires organization and form, a body of customs and traditions, established leadership, an enduring division of labour, social rules and social values, in short a culture, a social organization and new scheme of life, it becomes a social movement." It can also be defined as, "social mobilization over a sustained period of time with a collectivity having consensus to struggle (in terms of ideas as well as action) to achieve certain goals can be defined as a movement."

6.7 FEATURES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

In order for any collective action to be considered as a movement it needs to have the following feautres:

- Sustained collective action: Social movement is marked by sustained collective action, any isolated episode of protest cannot be considered as social movement as it flares up and dies down without any impact. A sustained collective effort can be directed to demand change from any discriminatory public policy or oppressive social practices.
- Organization: Spontaneous, disorganized acts of protest do not qualify as a movement. It needs some form of organization including a clearly defined leadership who provide impetus to the movement and a structure. Without a structure, it would difficult for members to relate to one another, take decisions and implement them.
- Objective and ideology:It should have clearly articulated objective and ideology outlining the goals of the movement. Its ideology would be the defining feature that would direct the course of the movement and provide a means to connect with the masses.
- Shared Understanding: It is very important to have a shared understanding in order to bring about social change on a public issue. Different strategies like holding public meetings, seminars, workshop, campaigning and lobbying are used to create "a feeling of consensus or agreement" on perusal of a collective agenda of

the movement.

- Distinct modes of protest: A social movement might develop a distinct mode of protest like candle light vigil, used of white or black cloth, street play, graffiti, songs, poetry. Gandhi used satyagraha and ahimsa as a mode of protest.

6.8 TYPES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

There are three kinds of social movements:

Redemptive: Redemptive movement attempts to bring about change in the "personal consciousness and actions of its individual members." For example: The Neo- Vaishnavite movement pioneered by Shankardev who ushered in an era of socio-cultural renaissance with an emphasis on ethnic integration, societal reforms and spiritual uplift through an innovative mode of religious conduct based on indigenous elements of this region. He preached devotion to a single God, Lord Krishna, incarnation of Lord Vishnu, (Eka Sarana) who can be worshiped solely by uttering His various names. He was against idol worshipping and introduced the institution of N?m - ghars or prayer-halls which accessible to everyone irrespective of their caste or status. He established numerous Sattras. Sattras were decentralised monasteries headed by a Guru (teacher) where disciples reside and are initiated into the Neo-Vaishnavite culture.

Reformative: Reformative social movement aim to change the existing social and political structures by gradual changes. For instance, the Bachpan Bachao Andolan initiated in 1980 by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi who has been campaigning for child rights in terms of ending child labour and establishing right to education for all children. In 2001, a nation-wide Shiksha yatra was organized by the BBA to demand for right to education tobecomea fundamental right which led to the constitutional amendment. After decades of struggle the RTE gets implemented as a fundamental right in 2010.

Revolutionary: Revolutionary movement aims to radically transform structures by capturing state power. For instance, the Naxalite movement,

a peasant movement which began in 1966 at the Naxalbari Police station in West Bengal under the leadership of the cadres of Communist Party of India (Maoist) spread to several states of India. By 1969, Charu Majumdar became the leader of the newly formed Marxist Party (Marxist- Leninist) an off-shoot of the CPI(M) and advocated for long-drawn-out guerrilla warfare to bring about revolutionary change within the country as they felt that the kind of democracy practiced in India was a sham. Hence they forcibly took away land from rich landowners and gave it to the landless. By now, 9 states with predominantly Adivasi population are affected by the Naxalite movement. The major supporters of the movement were landless cultivators, share-croppers or small farmers who have been exploited by money-lenders as well as the state machinery.

Though the above typology can be used to classify movements, it can be observed that a movement will have a mixture of redemptive, reformist or revolutionary elements. A movement might start off with reformist objectives and might end up with revolutionary objectives if their demands do not get fulfilled with non-violent means. It can begin with mass mobilization to fulfill grievances and become institutionalized; Krishi Mukti Sangram Samiti is a classic example of this. Also, the classification of a movement into any of the above typologies is a matter of interpreting and attaching meaning to it. For instance, in 1856, Indian nationalist claimed to wage the first war of independence but it was perceived to be a mutiny by the British officials.

6.9 DIFFERENT FORMS OF MOVEMENT

Though there are numerous forms of movements, here only a selected few are discussed in a detailed manner. The intention is to discuss movements which are related to our social context, considered too important to be ignored and occupy spaces in our national imagination.

6.9.1 ECOLOGICAL MOVEMENTS:

The current paradigm of development followed by modern capitalistic economies relies heavily on natural resources to feed the unending demand

for energy. This has created conflict over the slowly depleting reserve of natural resources between the people who depend on it for their livelihood and the ones who want to exploit it for their personal benefits. Hence a number of ecological movements have occurred in the last few decades raising questions of environmental sustainability, issues of livelihood and rights of indigenous people to their commonly held natural resources.

Chipko Movement: In 1960, the Chipko movement, a non-violent movementbegan in the foothills of Himalayas to protest the large scale felling of trees that has caused tremendous environment degradation in the form of floods and landslides. Men and women actively participate in it; they hugged the oak trees in order to discourage government officials from chopping them. The first incident of tree-hugging was reported at Reni village in Uttarakhand to prevent government forest contractors from chopping them to use as raw material for private corporations.It raised question of rights over forest produce between the indigenous people of Uttarakhand who depend on it for their subsistence and outsiders who wanted to exploit it for their private profit. Destruction of natural resources in terms of

Narmada Bachaon Andolan:It began in 1988 with a conglomeration of Voluntary organizations to protest against the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Project,a multi-scale mutli-purpose damon river Narmada and its tributaries in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The movementbrought to limelight the ecological destruction and displacement of indigenous people from their lands caused by big developmental projects, the Sardar Sarovar Project submerged 245 villages and displaced lakhs of people. Initially, it demanded the rehabilitation of people affected directly or indirectly by the dam and questioned the decision-making process that take place during the construction of mega projects. But after 20 years of agitating, it changed its stand to opposing the construction of the dam.

6.9.2 POLITICAL MOVEMENTS

The concept of modern nation states with clearly demarcated geographical boundaries that define them as distinct political units have led to numerous conflicts between residents of one nation with another as well

within themselves on issues of citizenship, regional identity versus national identity and separatist aspirations from the state.

Assam Agitation:

The Assam Agitation started as a people's movement in 1969, with the All Assam Students Union (AASU) played a central role in mobilizing the public for wide-scale protests and dharnas. Its main objective was to protect the assamese identity as Assam was being swamped by illegal immigrants from Bangladesh who exploited its rich natural resources and eroded its culture. It demanded for the identification and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants from the territories of Assam. This was coupled with the socio-cultural and economic aspirations of the assamese peopleas they felt that they were being economically exploitation by the centredue its rich natural resources like tea, oil, coal and timber.Thousands of people participated in this immensely popular movement adversely affecting the functioning of the government and bringing life to a standstill. It used various pressure tactics as a means of protest likeshutting down of schools and colleges, blocking supply of crude oil to the rest of the country.The Movement culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord, which stated that Foreigners who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1961 will be to be detected, deleted and expelled in accordance with law. However, the foreigners who had migrated to Assam before 1961 will be considered to be the citizens of Assam.

Bodo Movement:

In 1986, the ABSU(All Bodo Student Union) under the leadership of Upendra Brahma launched the Bodo movement for the next six years on the basis of 92 demands which with time got reduced to mere three demands:(1) Creation of a separate state called "Bodo land" on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, (2) Creation of a district council in the tribal dominated contiguous areas of south bank, (3) Inclusion of Bodo- Kacharies of Karbi Anglong in the sixth schedule of the Constitution. Though the ABSU leadership termed it as peaceful, it had resulted in loss of life due to bomb blasts, police action and acts of destruction which adversely affected the

life of the people as well as the economy of the state. These acts of violence were carried out by the BSF (Bodo Security Force) the militant wing of the ABSU. The Bodo movement was styled along the lines of the AASU led Assam Agitationwhose leaders were ironically at the receiving end as they held office in the AGP government.

6.9.3 WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Women organizations and individual women have been struggling to attain basic economic, social and political rights for decades. Diverse strategies are used to spread awareness, fight against discrimination and seek redressal from the judiciary. In 1980s women organizations took to the streets to raise awareness about dowry deaths and the failure of the judicial system to deal with such cases which led to changes in the dowry laws.After decades of struggle, it led the implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006.In addition to this, to increase women's political representation,the Constitution directs 33% of seats to be reserved for women candidates in institutions of local self-governance. The advocates of women's movement felt that the concerns of different women would be different, for instance the concern of a peasant women would be different from a middle-class office worker. But some of the concerns like safety in public places would be similar henceto make women feel secure in public places, guidelines were provided by the Supreme Court to prevent sexual abuse in work-place and educational institutions.



The Domestic Violence Act. 2006 is an outcome of women's movements.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 4: What is social movement?

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Q 5: What are three different kinds of social movement?

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6.10 LET US SUM UP

- When certain significant change occurs that transform the very foundations of anything or any structure, it can be considered as social change.
- Social change can be classified according to its pace, its nature or impact in society, direction and source or causes.Itssources or causesare categorized into four types: environment, economy and technology and, politicsand culture.
- Various processes of social change are industrialisation, urbanization,sanskritisation, westernization and modernisation.
- Social movement is defined as, "social mobilization over a sustained period of time with a collectivity having consensus to struggle (in terms of ideas as well as action) to achieve certain goals can be defined as a movement."
- Features of social movements:sustained collective action, organization, objective and ideology,shared understanding and distinct mode of protest.
- There are three kinds of social movements: Redemptive, Reformative and Revolutionary
- Various kinds of movements like ecological, political and women's movement



6.11 FURTHER READING

1. Srinivas, M.N. 'Social Change in Modern India'

Ray, Raka, Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, Social Movements in India: Poverty, Power and Politics, Rowman & Littlefield, 2005

6.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

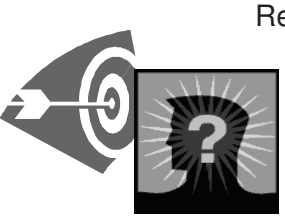
Ans to Q No 1: No, any change in a society cannot be termed as social change.

Ans to Q No 2: The sources of social change are categorized into four types: environment, economy and technology and, politics and culture.

Ans to Q No 3: The processes of social change are industrialisation, urbanization, sanskritisation, westernization and modernisation.

Ans to Q No 4: Social movement refers to social mobilization over a sustained period of time with a collectivity having consensus to struggle (in terms of ideas as well as action) to achieve certain goals.

Ans to Q No 5: There are three kinds of social movements: Redemptive, Reformative and Revolutionary



6.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1: Define Social Change.

Q2: Define social movement with its features.

Q3: Describe the different types of social movements

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q1: On what basis can social change be classified? Explain the sources of social change in details

Q2: Explain the various processes of Social Change.

Q3: What are the different kinds of movement? Explain them in details.