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Social Movements

SEMESTER IV

POLITICAL SCIENCE

BLOCK : 1

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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MASTER OF ARTS
POLITICAL SCIENCE
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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The first course of the Fourth Semester of MA Programme in Political Science of KKHSOU is titled as "Social Movements." It is designed to help the learners to have a clear understanding of the various dimensions of Social movements. It is supposed that the learners of the Master Degree Programme in Political Science should have thorough knowledge about the concept of social movements. Keeping this in view, the course begins with the concept of social movements and its historical background which have significantly helped in the development of the concept of social movements.

The first unit of the course deals with the concept of social movements. In this unit, the meaning and definition of social movements; historical background; features of social movements and Importance of social movements are discussed. The second unit of the course discusses the various phases and types of social movements, its determinants and different approaches to social movements. In this unit, the causes of social movements and their outcomes are also discussed. In the third unit, ideology of social movements, distinguishing social movements from social institutions and social associations; organizational and leadership dynamics of social movement and role of leadership in social movements are explained. Through this unit, the learners will be familiarised with the various aspects of ideology and leadership dynamics. The fourth unit is related to the Durkheim's concept of Anomie; concept of Relative Deprivation. The theories of social movements, anomie theory, Durkheim's concept of anomie; concept of relative deprivation are discussed in this unit. Similarly, the meaning and definition of social change, factors responsible for social change, different theories of social change, impact of social change, reform, revival, revolution and counter movements are analysed in the fifth unit. The sixth unit deals with the Marxist and Post-Marxist theories of social movements. It is related with Marxist theory of social movement, State and Societal Revolution in Capitalist Society, Post-Marxist theories of social movement: Gramsci's perception, Louis Althusser's Structural Perspective and Nicos Poulantzas' perspective on social movement. The seventh unit discusses the Weberian theory of action: types of social action and features of social action. The unit eight is dealt with Talcott Parsons' Structural-Functionalism and Parsons' Theory of Social Action.

The unit nine deals with the nature and dynamics of new social movements. In this unit, discussions are made about meaning, nature, dynamics and impact of new social movements. Accordingly, the role of the peasant movements are discussed in the unit tenth. Here, meaning, nature, organization, origin and development of the peasant movement are also explained. The eleventh unit deals with the origin and development, nature, kinds and significance of labour and trade union movements in India. In unit

twelve, discussions are made on meaning and nature of various environmental movements in India namely- Narmada Bachao Andolon and Chipko movement. The significance of environmental movements in India are also discussed here. The thirteenth unit highlights the concept of ethnicity, origin and developments of autonomy movements in Assam and factors responsible for the growth of autonomy movement in Assam including Karbi-Dimasa and Bodo movement. The fourteenth unit focusses on the issue of the meaning and nature of identity movement in Assam, origin and development of the Assam movement and its features and consequences. The fifteenth unit deals with the emergence of women's movement in north east India, characteristics of women's movements in north east India and role of Meira Paibis and Naga Mothers' Association (NMA).

The course "Social Movements" is divided into two blocks- Block 1 and Block 2. Block 1 contains eight units (Unit 1 - 8) and Block 2 contains seven units (Unit 9 - 15).

INTRODUCTION TO BLOCK 1

The first course of the Fourth Semester of MA Programme in Political Science of KKHSOU is titled as "Social Movements." The first block of this course contains eight units- (Units 1-8).

The first unit of the course deals with the concept of social movements. In this unit, the meaning and definition of social movements; historical background; features of social movements and Importance of social movements are discussed. The second unit of the course discusses the various phases and types of social movements, its determinants and different approaches to social movements. In this unit, the causes of social movements and their outcomes are also discussed. In the third unit, ideology of social movements, distinguishing social movements from social institutions and social associations; organizational and leadership dynamics of social movement and role of leadership in social movements are explained. Through this unit, the learners will be familiarised with the various aspects of ideology and leadership dynamics. The fourth unit is related to the Durkheim's concept of Anomie; concept of Relative Deprivation. The theories of social movements, anomie theory, Durkheim's concept of anomie; concept of relative deprivation are discussed in this unit. Similarly, the meaning and definition of social change, factors responsible for social change, different theories of social change, impact of social change, reform, revival, revolution and counter movements are analysed in the fifth unit. The sixth unit deals with the Marxist and Post-Marxist theories of social movements. It is related with Marxist theory of social movement, State and Societal Revolution in Capitalist Society, Post-Marxist theories of social movement: Gramsci's perception, Louis Althusser's Structural Perspective and Nicos Poulantzas' perspective on social movement. The seventh unit discusses the Weberian theory of action: types of social action and features of social action. The unit eight is dealt with Talcott Parsons' Structural-Functionalism and Parsons' Theory of Social Action.

While going through the units of the block, you will find that the units are further divided into certain sections and sub-sections, wherever necessary, for your better understanding. Besides, in order to give you additional information on certain relevant topics, you will find a category called "LET US KNOW" after the sections in each unit. Another category that has been included at the end of each section of a particular unit is "CHECK YOUR PROGRESS". The purpose of this category is to help you to asses for yourself as to how thoroughly you have understood a particular section. You may then match your answers with "ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS" given at the end of each unit. The section "FURTHER READING" in each unit contains the names of a few books which you might want to consult if you are interested in learning more elaborately about the concepts discussed in a particular unit. Furthermore, the category called "POSSIBLE QUESTIONS" is intended to give you a hint of the type of questions you are likely to get in the examination.

UNIT 1: SOCIAL MOVEMENT

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives
1.2 Introduction
1.3 Meaning and Definition of Social Movements
1.4 Historical Background of Social Movements
1.5 Features of Social Movements
1.6 Importance of Social Movements
1.7 Let Us Sum Up
1.8 Further Reading
1.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
1.10 Possible Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the meaning and definition of social movements
- explain the historical background of social movements
- discuss the features of Social Movements
- know about the importance of social movements.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Social Movements are collective expression of masses against the political and social authority to bring changes which the common people inspire for or which might bring common welfare. It aims to develop consensus regarding certain changes or demands of the population. It is mostly unorganisational activity or loosely organised activity performed in a group and administered by a number of people. It is a shared group activity based mostly on informal networks. It addresses the problems and evils of society. It requires sustained collective action over a long period of time. Considering this matter, the chapter tends to develop a comprehensive deliberation on meaning, historical background, features, types and importance of social movements.

1.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In general, people indulge in organized dissatisfaction against inadequate policies, activities and feeling of injustice created by the authority. This may lead to the emergence of social movements. Collectively social movements act for bringing changes in the socio-political structure. In order to implement a good social policy or to prevent the society from a harmful policy direction, people usually resort to social movement and stand for better well-being.

In protest against observed inequalities, oppression and unjustified social, political, economic and cultural demands, a large number of people mostly in informal grouping come together and raise their demands. At their core, social movements are not about “polite debate” or “invited spaces” of interaction between the state and the society.

Thus, different large or informal or unorganized groups protest against specific socio-political issues and try to reframe them for the greater social convenience which can be identified as social movements. In other words, they develop resistance against undue policies and stand for bringing greater social change.

Different scholars of different fields conceptualize social movements from their own theoretical formulation. Such as Karl Marx’s view of social movements tends to nullify capitalism and believes in revolutionary changes to set up a conducive environment for the labourers, farmers and socially weaker classes. Max Weber’s concept highlights the role of a charismatic leader or authority to bring a new height to the aspired aims.

The term “social movements” was introduced in 1848 by the German Sociologist Lorenz Von Stein in his book *Socialist and Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution.* The term “social movement” gained currency in European languages in the early 19th century. This was a period of social upheaval.

According to Anderson and Parker, social movement is “a form of dynamic pluralistic behaviour which progressively develops structure through time and aims at partial or complete modification of the social order.”

Lundberg and others defined social movement as “a voluntary association of people engaged in concerted efforts to change attitudes, behaviour and social relationships in a larger society.”

Charles Tilly defined social movements as a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. For Tilly, social movements are a major vehicle for ordinary people’s participation in public politics.

Sidney Tarrow defines a social movement as collective challenges (to elites, authorities, other groups or cultural codes) by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities. He specifically distinguishes social movements from political parties and advocacy groups.

Social movements are not eternal. They have a life cycle: they are created, they grow, they achieve successes or failures and, eventually, they dissolve and cease to exist.

Social Movements are “organized efforts to promote or resist change in society that rely, at least in part, on non-institutionalized forms of political action” (Marx and McAdam, 1994)

De la Porta & Diani in *Social Movements: An Introduction,* referred some characteristics of social movements as they are “involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents, are linked by dense informal networks; (and they) share a distinct collective identity.

Turner and Killian (1972) defines social movement as some continuous and group behaviour to uphold or defy certain change in his/her society or group. It is initiated, organized and sustained collective action marked by definite ideology and oriented towards social change.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: State the meaning of social movement?

.....

.....

Q.2: Social movement is ..... action. (Fill in the blank).

Q.3: Karl Marx's view of social movements tends to nullify capitalism and it believes in revolutionary changes to set up a conducive environment for labours, farmers and socially weaker classes. (Write True or False).

.....

Q.4: Write a few definitions of social movement? (Within 50 words)

.....

.....

.....

1.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The roots of first documented social movements can be traced back in the late 18th Century French Revolution and Polish Constitution of May 3rd 1791. Again, the late 19th Century labour movements and socialist movements are the classical examples of social movements that led to the formation of communist and social democratic parties and organizations.

Considering the matters of political representation, market capitalization and proletarianization in the mid-18th century, the early Social Movements in England were developed. John Wilkes was the figure behind the first mass social movement. A person from the paper house, he attacked the new administration and the peace terms by the Government were accepted at the 1763 Treaty of Paris at the end of the Seven Years' War. Consequently, he was suppressed but that led to the growing movement for popular sovereignty among the middle class people who began chanting "Wilkes and Liberty" in the streets. Later, an activist group called the Society for the Supporters of the Bill of Rights began aggressively promoting his

policies. This was the first ever sustained social movement involving public meetings, demonstrations, the distribution of pamphlets on an unprecedented scale and the mass petition march. Later, Wilkes was returned to the Parliament and general warrants were declared as unconstitutional and press freedom was extended to the coverage of Parliamentary debates.

A much larger movement of anti-Catholic protest was triggered by the Papists Act 1778, which eliminated a number of the penalties and disabilities endured by the Roman Catholics in England. In 1780, after a meeting of the Protestant Association, it's members subsequently marched on the House of Commons to deliver a petition demanding the repeal of the Act, which the government refused to do. It resulted in large riots across London and embassies and Catholic owned businesses were attacked by angry mobs.

Other political movements that emerged in the late 18th century included the British abolitionist movement against slavery (one being the sugar boycott of 1791 and the other the great petition drive of 1806), and possibly the upheaval surrounding the French and American Revolutions.

From 1815, Britain after its victory in the Napoleonic Wars entered into the period of mature social movements. Chartism was the first mass movement of the growing working class people in the world. It campaigned for political reform between 1838 and 1848 with the people's charter of 1838 as its manifesto which called for Universal Suffrage and the implementation of the secret ballot, amongst other things. The term "social movements" was introduced in 1848 by the German sociologist Lorenz Von Stein in his book *"Socialist Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution"* (1848) in which he introduced the term "social movement" into scholarly discussions-actually depicting in this way political movements fighting for the social rights understood as welfare rights.

The labour movement and socialist movement of the late 19th century are seen as the prototypical social movements, leading to the formation of communist and social democratic parties and organizations. These

tendencies were seen in poorer countries as the pressure for reform continued, for example, Russia with the Russian Revolution of 1905 and of 1917, resulting in the collapse of the Czarist regime around the end of the First World War.

In 1945, Britain following its victory in the Second World War entered a period of radical reform and change. In the post-war period, feminist movements, gay rights movement, peace movements, civil rights movements, anti-nuclear movements and environmental movements and many more new domains in the field of social movements were developed. They led to the formation of green parties and organizations, a new global social movement, the anti-globalization movement etc.

Throughout the history of the United States, social movements have been a staple in the maturation of the country. From middle class white women's desire to be included in the American political process in the 19th century came the Women's Suffrage movement. The insurgence of a generation of African Americans who left they had inalienable rights that deserved to be acknowledged by their government led to the 1960's civil rights movement.

As early as the American Revolution, the sophisticated mobilization of the American people displayed the characteristics of a modern social movement. For instance, Philadelphia women proposed to create a national women's organizational movement to raise money for the troops and renounced the use of British tea and fabric. The women helped to ignite one of the earliest nonprofit organizations in the history of the nation, the Daughters of Liberty (which continues till today). The women organized mass spinning bees for wartime clothing, conducted national boycotts and some women even disguised themselves as men and fought in the army.

Like the other parts of the world, the Indian origin of social movements can be traced back to 7th and 5th Centuries BC. It was the period of two socio-religious movements developed; when the Kshatriyas reacted against the Brahmanical domination and Baishyas were trying to improve their economic conditions along with the increase of trade.

Besides, Bhakti movement was another significant socio-religious movement to protect Hinduism, originated in South India during the 7th to 8th century. It was spread northwards from Tamil Nadu through Karnataka and gained wide acceptance in 15th Century in Bengal and Northern India. At that time, the dominant Islamic rulers pushed general public to religious conversion from Hinduism to Islam. In the 19th century, India witnessed reform movements to end evils of society and religion. These are under the banner of Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and some other reformatory organizations.

Again, in pre-colonial and post-colonial period; India witnessed peasant's movements, Dalits movements, backward-caste movements, tribal movements, students' movements, women's movements, environmental movements and some other new social movements representing the issues and prospects of Indian socio-political, religious and economic lives.

1.5 FEATURES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movements are primarily marked by the following characteristics

- Most of the social movements are carried on the basis of informal networks of interactions among the people having common beliefs and solidarity. They are mobilized around contentious themes and frequently use various forms of protest.
- Social Movements develops via cycles of activities. Only through protest one cannot affirm the existence of a movement. Because various movements have diverse strategies, tactics and work-plans.
- Certain social movements propagate definite vision and some others strive for the rights and liberties of people.
- It is an organized collective act with common objective, philosophy and organizational leadership.
- They may opt for change or oppose it. But the intensity and coverage of the change they demand, may vary.

- Sometimes, they challenge or defend existing institutional models or diverse fields of authority.
- They are collective enterprises and display at least some degrees of continuity over time with at least some degrees of organization.
- Certain social movements reflect people's dissatisfaction and are much concerned about their matter. They often use 'Propaganda'-to draw attention from the masses and from different sectors.
- Certain social movements are able to highly influence public opinion and motivate the masses in a large scale.
- Social Movements can be of Resistance type, Reform type, Revolutionary type, Expressive type etc. Resistance types refuse to accept the changes occurred in the system. Reform types demand reforms in the societal structure and system. Revolutionary types believe in radical changes via revolution. Expressive types are concentrating on improving the quality of life of their members for better changes.
- The goals of Social Movements are like equitable distribution of material resources, demanding full citizenship rights, re-formation of values, priorities and norms of a society.
- In most of the social movements, the general mob exercise power by withholding their consent on the matters like refusing to participate in everyday life, denying others their labour, refusing to work to force employer, civil disobedience, marches, parades, rallies, purposefully and openly violating the law, street protests etc.
- Social movements push the allied community to capitalize socio-political and economic opportunities and transform them into social change. Social movements allow people to come together and speak commonly about their basic issues. Movements are often taken as tools to upgrade the level of intellectual thinking and logical reasoning by the educated sections and they generalized the summary of the movement amongst the poor and illiterates and accordingly mobilize the whole society for the common cost. Thus, movements bring

greater social bonding and unity irrespective of diversities among social groups as and when the issues carried on by the leaders of the movement are common for all of them.

- Social movements are seen as instruments for greater social improvement, awareness building mechanism for greater cohesion and social articulation. They are collective steps for bringing social adjustment, change and mobilization.

Thus, a social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups or organizations, engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity (Diani, 1992:13).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: The members of social movement share common objectives. (Write True or False)

.....

Q.6: Identify the first documented social movement.

.....

.....

Q.7: Name the author of the book "*Socialist Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution*."

.....

.....

Q.8: Identify two features of social movements.

.....

.....

1.6 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The effectiveness or significance of social movements can be identified on the following points:

- Social movements can enlighten their members through developing awareness, improving their level of education, suggesting effective policy measures, mobilizing, organizing and formalizing collective

action and developing non-state civil society groups or actors etc.

- Social movements mostly benefit the weaker, unrepresented, marginalized groups. Their voice and problems are often highlighted in the platform of social movements.
- It helps the members of social movements to critically assess the social reality and offer solutions for their problems.
- It generates collective identity to unstructured masses.
- It tends to satisfy shared interests of the group and enhance support to their actions in a structured manner.
- It tries to establish a new order of life after a prolonged struggle and helps people to get benefits from the existing political situations or demands for social change.
- Actually, social movements raise their questions against the available inappropriate socio-political policies and structures.
- Most of the social movements are demanding greater changes against the social problems like Anti-Poverty Movement, Anti-Arrack Movement, Labour Movement, Environmental protection movement, etc.

From the above discussions, it is clear that the different social movements have different connotations and length. So, their implications are also diverse and manifold.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.9: Different social movements have different connotations and length. So, their implications are also diverse and manifold. (Write True or False).

.....

Q.10: Social movements are associated with voice against social ..... (Fill in the Blank)

Q.11: Examine the significance of social movement. (Within 50 words)

.....

.....



1.7 LET US SUM UP

- Social Movements are collective action of the people against an established social order and policies. It collectively acts for bringing changes in the socio-political structure.
- The term “social movements” was introduced in 1848 by the German Sociologist Lorenz von Stein in his book *Socialist and Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution* (1848).
- Social movements are not eternal. They have a life cycle: they are created, they grow, they achieve successes or failures and, eventually, they dissolve and cease to exist.
- Roots of the first documented social movements can be traced back in the late 18th Century French Revolution and the Polish Constitution of May 3rd 1791.
- Considering the matters of political representation, market capitalization and proletarianization, the mid-18th century early social movements in England were developed. John Wilkes was the figure behind the first mass social movement.
- From 1815, Britain following its victory in the Napoleonic Wars entered into the period of mature social movements.
- Social movements develops via cycles of activities. Only through protest we cannot affirm the existence of a movement. Because various movements have diverse strategies, tactics and work-plans.
- Certain social movements propagate definite vision and some others strive for the rights and liberties of people.
- It is an organized collective act with common objective, philosophy and organizational leadership.
- Social movements can enlighten their members through developing awareness, improving their level of education, suggesting effective policy measures, mobilizing, organizing and formalizing collective action and developing non-state civil society groups or actors etc.

- Social movements mostly benefit the weaker, unrepresented, marginalized groups. Their voice and problems are often highlighted in the platform of social movements.
- It helps the members of social movements to critically assess the social reality and offer solutions for their problems.
- It generates collective identity to the unstructured masses.
- It tends to satisfy shared interests of the group and enhance support to their actions in a structured manner.



1.8 FURTHER READING

1) Blau, J.R. (Ed.). (2004). *The Blackwell companion to Sociology.* USA: Blackwell.
2) Chesters, G. and Welsh, I. (2011). *Social movements: The key concepts.* London: Routledge.
3) De la Porta & Diani (2006). *Social movements: An introduction.* USA: Malden MA: Blackwell Published. 2nd Edition.

e-Resources:

https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-movement

worldanimal, net>documents>4_Movements_for_Social_Change.pdf

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_movement

https://www.learningtogive.org/resources/social-movement

https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/99781118541555.wbiepc010

www.gsdrc.org>uploads>2017/03>social-movements pdf



1.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Social Movements are the collective action of the people against an established social order.

Ans to Q No 2: Collective Action.

Ans to Q No 3: True.

Ans to Q No 4: Anderson and Parker defined social movement as a "form of dynamic pluralistic behaviour which progressively develops structure through time and aims at a partial or complete modification of the social order".

Lundberg and others define social movement as "a voluntary association of people engaged in concerted efforts to change attitudes, behaviour and social relationships in a larger society. For, Charles Tilly, social movements are a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics.

Ans to Q No 5: True.

Ans to Q No 6: The roots of first documented social movements can be traced back in the late 18th Century French Revolution and Polish Constitution of May 3rd 1791.

Ans to Q No 7: Lorenz von Stein.

Ans to Q No 8: Social Movements develop via cycles of activities. Only through protest one cannot affirm the existence of a movement because various movements have diverse strategies, tactics and work-plans. Certain social movements propagate definite vision and some others strive for the rights and liberties of people. It is an organized collective act with a common objective, philosophy and organizational leadership. They may opt for change or oppose it. But the intensity and coverage of the change they demand; may vary. Sometimes, they challenge or defend the existing institutional models or diverse fields of authority.

Ans to Q No 9: True.

Ans to Q No 10: Problems.

Ans to Q No 11: A social movement mostly benefits the weaker, unrepresented, marginalized groups. Their voice and problems are often highlighted in the platform of a social movement. It helps the members of social movement to critically assess the social reality and offer solutions for their problems. It generates collective identity for the unstructured masses. It tends to satisfy the shared interests of the group and enhance support to their actions in a structured manner.



1.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : What do you mean by social movement?

Q. 2 : Mention one inevitable characteristic of social movement.

Q. 3 : Social movements are combination of both structured and unstructured population. (Mark true or false).

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

Q. 1 : Examine the different types of social movements.

Q. 2 : Discuss the historical background behind the development of social movements.

Q. 3 : Mention the different views regarding the meaning and concept of social movement.

C) Long Questions (answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q. 1 : Assess the significance of social movements.

Q. 2 : Comprehensively discuss the features of social movements.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 2: TYPES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Various Phases and Types of Social Movements

2.4 Determinants of Social Movements: Different Approaches to Social Movements

2.5 Causes of Social Movements and Their Outcomes

2.6 Let Us Sum Up

2.7 Further Reading

2.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.9 Possible Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand various phases and types of Social Movements
- explain the determinants of Social Movements
- describe different approaches to Social Movements
- discuss the causes of Social Movements and their outcomes.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Social Movements are the common and shared objectives of dissatisfied people against the socio-political authority to bring changes for collective betterment. There are different manifestations of social movements. Different sections of people with varied objectives, ideological connotations such as revolution, reformation, resistance in different phases develops different social movements. The unit thus, aims to discuss different types and phases of social movements. Again, the determinants of social movements like personal causes, relative deprivation and others shall also be discussed in the unit. The different approaches to study social movements, causes and outcomes of social movements shall also be included in the unit. Considering all these matters, the chapter tends to

develop a comprehensive deliberation on various stages, types, determinants, causes and outcomes of social movements.

2.3 VARIOUS PHASES AND TYPES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Phases of social movements can be distinctly explained by understanding the life cycle of the movement. It contains the starting, growth and results of the movement. Different movements occur in different societies marked by the way of rule, social needs and demands. Rise of demands like individual and social rights, freedom of expression, and civil disobedience of 19th century offered the seeds for the growth of a number of social movements throughout the world. Again the people engaged in different social movements are of different agenda and viewpoints. In ancient times, differences in poverty and wealth are factors and in modern times, it is the varied customs, ethics and values. Thus, the origin of social movements are marked by certain initiating event; that may be individual and specific but that usually followed chain reaction from the concerned society and develop the movement. Such as Mahatma Gandhi was thrown out of train in South Africa as he was a black and that was an event that triggered movement against Apartheid in South Africa. Hence, social movements are normally created when a large number of people realized that there are others sharing the same values. Accordingly they aspire for social change and indulge in movement.

Social movements are in difficult situations in the succeeding stage, when they have to show existence and acquire mass support. In this regard, they are often headed by charismatic leaders and they increase mass popularity. Besides, outside elements like- government, civil society groups etc. are generally significant in creating awareness and solidarity among people. Despite having all these issues, many a times, movements faced the crisis of failure or defunct.

Stages of social movements include the study on the life cycle of social movements starting from its inception, its growth and maturity and finally results. Blumer (1969) and Tilly (1978) outline a four-stage process. In the

initial stage, people develop awareness about a matter and choose a leader to run the masses. This is followed by the second stage of developing membership of the movement, its publicity and increasing awareness. In the third stage, the movement becomes institutionalized and already upgraded to a well-established organization. At the fourth stage of the movement, people may fall away and adopt a new movement or may bring another turn to the movement, sometimes the movement may decline at this stage.

Social movements are of different types marked by their objectives, ways of protest, expansion and scope. The sociologist David Aberle (1966), distinguished the social movements based on what they want to change and how much change they want. Besides, social movements can be seen in local, national and global level, considering the peripheral span of the movement. Movements can again be classified into revolutionary type, religious/redemptive type, alternative type, resistance type etc. Revolutionary movements seek to completely change every aspect of the society. Religious or Redemptive movements are attempting to change the inner spiritual feelings of the individuals. Alternative movements are focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behaviour. Resistance movements seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure. Another type may be the reactionary movements and they try to block social change or to reverse social changes that have already been achieved. Besides, we have seen the self-help movements; where people try to improve various aspects of their personal lives.

Apart from the aspects discussed above, the types of social movements can be classified into the following lines:

1. Reform movements are organized to carry out reforms in some specific areas. Such as Civil rights movement, Women's liberation movement, Arya Samaj movement and Brahmo Samaj movement (in Indian context) etc. Here, the participants of the movement attempt to generate better arrangements for the society as a whole.
2. Revolutionary movements deny the system and are deeply dissatisfied with the social order and work for radical change. They advocate for

replacing the whole existing structure. They try to re-arrange the society as per their vision. Usually, they resort to violence, such as the Protestant Reformation Movement, the Socialist Movement, and the Communist Revolution of China.

3. Resistance movements are arranged to develop voices against the changes taking place in the society and culture and they are against the views of the protesters.

4. Utopian movements attempt to take the society or a section of it towards a state of perfection, and for that, it sometimes support radical changes. The means and ends of such movements are often abstract and have less specific programmes to attain them. The movement for establishing Ram Rajya in India or the establishment of stateless, classless society by the Communists are the best examples here.

5. The peasant movement can be historically traced back to the colonial movement in Indian context, when repressive economic policies, the new land revenue system, the colonial administrative and judicial system harshly affected the economic life of the peasants. In the feudal system too, the farmers were suppressed economically, socially as well as culturally by the landlords. At the unbearable stage, they resisted the system which gave birth to a situation of unrest, uprising and violence. Some important peasant uprising are---Sanyasi rebellion (1770), Wahabi rebellion(1831), Santal rebellion (1855), Indigo revolt (1859), Champaran Satyagrah (1917-18), Naxalbari Movement (1957) etc.

6. The women's movement in India has been a rich and vibrant movement which has taken different forms in different parts of the country since the time of India's freedom struggle. Since 1848, voice for the rights of women along with men appears in the western countries. Later, different stages and slogans have appeared in different stages. Personal rights, political rights, reproductive rights, demands for equal pay, group rights have been some of the demands by women in different phases.

7. The Backward Caste movements started to make secure the social, economic, political and religious conditions of the underprivileged. They were subjected to extreme form of exploitation in the caste

system. The colonial rule further developed differences in economic lines. The atrocities united the lower castes against the upper castes. E.V. Ramaswamy, started Self-Respect Movement against the Brahmins in South India. Subsequently, after the Independence, Backward Class Commission was set up to look into the conditions and requirements of these classes. Mandal Commission submitted its report in 1980 recommending reservations for the backward castes in the educational institutions and government offices. These are some of the significant examples of backward caste movements.

8. The Dalit Movements started as part of the demands of the suppressed people in the Caste-based hierarchy. Their ascriptive status pushes them back to vulnerability in the hands of the upper-caste people. The organizational efforts made by the Dalit leadership for uplifting their status are known as the Dalit movement. It is a protest against issues related to untouchability, casteism, and discrimination faced by the Dalits. Mahatma Gandhi, in 1923, founded the All India Harijan Sevak Sangh to start education and schools for the Dalits. Another most important Dalit leader, Dr. Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar struggled to secure the basic human dignity for the Dalits. The Mahad Satyagrah for the right of water led by him was one of the outstanding movements of the dalits to win equal social rights. The role of the All India Depressed Classes Association and All India depressed Classed Federation were the Principal organizations which initiated a movement to improve the conditions of the dalits. They worked to secure the rights of the Dalits, spread education and ensure their empowerment, their social and economic security etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Name one Sociologist who distinguished among the social movements based on what they want to change and how much change they want.

.....

Q.2: Social movement can be seen in --------, ----------and -------- level considering the peripheral span of the movement. (Fill in the blanks)

Q.3: Stages of social movements include the study on the life cycle of social movements. (Write True or False)

.....

Q.4: Examine the various types of social movement? (Within 50 words)

.....

.....

2.4 DETERMINANTS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The different types of social movements discussed above, emerge due to a number of issues such as- the idea of reformation, resistance, oppression, dissatisfaction, demands for rights and socio-economic upliftment etc. Besides, economic and political reasons, technology and development, population and problems, environmental factors and international issues, social and racial inequality etc. can also be defined as the determinants of social movements, which by and large motivate the people to fight for their growing concerns and needs. Lower economic growth, non-democratic political regimes are often the causes of social movements. Again, we may identify a list of the determinants of social movements marked by individual and psychological factors, ideological dimensions etc. and these can be studied through different approaches. Relative deprivation and resource mobilization are two most significant conceptual understanding to examine the determinants of social movements which are discussed below:

Individual factors can be identified with the help of certain psychological prospects that either led a person to actively participate in the movement or to help him to develop disapproval against the same. Alienation, feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and separation from society may influence an individual to participate in the movements. Deprivation, discontent and frustration are frequently assumed to be the common causes for initiating or

joining a social movement. An individual's feeling of deprivation may surround the whole group of society, i.e. relative deprivation may be a social determinant of social movement. However, the relative deprivation approach seeks to explain that the persons who are feeling themselves in most terrible situations develop a feeling of relative deprivation, and usually play a significant role in social movements. These issues are discussed below.

Relative deprivation approach refers to a situation when the social, economic and political situations fail to satisfy the masses and generate frustration, then they opt for changes. This kind of negative feeling brings people towards the situation of difference between peoples' wants and actualities. They may not be deprived in reality but they feel deprived by comparing with other privileged sections, which we call reference group. For example, a middle class family may feel relatively deprived when they compare their house to that of their upper-class professional family. Accordingly, the members feel that they deserve more rights, wealth, power, status and many more. Gradually, their frustration reach an upper limit and they loose their faith in the conventional methods and structures. Therefore, to attain their aim, the group will organize into a social movement and they believe that their collective action shall only bring success.

Resource mobilization is another approach to study how the social movements mobilize their organizational outlet, mass media, person, money and material etc. Effectiveness and failure of the movement are related to all the said resources and their fruitful uses. Here, the leadership of the movement takes the utmost responsibility to mobilize all these aspects.

In addition to it, a number of social movement theories under the classical and modern approaches are to be studied in order to understand the factors and issues leading to social movements.

Commonly, the classical approach believes in some casual mechanism that emerged at the turn of the century. It believes that the sources of social movements are structural constrains. The structural flaws of the society put the individuals under certain psychological repression, such as unemployment, rapid industrialization, urbanization and most of them are subjective in nature. When that psychological disturbance attains

the border line, it ultimately drives the people to movements as they deny the conventional means. These approaches further believe that peoples' participation in the movements is mostly irrational, motivational and emotional. Hardly, the masses follow the protocols and reasoning. These kinds of psychologically driven approaches are rejected by the contemporary sociologists and political scientists, though many scholars still gave their thrust on emotions. The work of Gustav LeBon, Herbert Blumer, William Kornhauser and Neil Smelser etc. are important in this field. Gustave LeBon, in his book "The Crowd" (1895), studied the collective behaviour of crowds and developed the conclusion that once an individual submerges in a crowd, his behaviour becomes primitive and irrational and he is therefore capable of spontaneous behaviour. This is the collective behaviour theory and further developed by theorists like Herbert Blumer and Neil Smelser.

Again, in the 1930's and 1940's, the Mass society theory emerged in the wake of fascist and communist movements. It tries to explore the rise of extremism abroad. The theory develops the fact that the socially isolated people are more vulnerable to extremism. On this theoretical ground, Emile Durkheim developed the analysis of modern society and rise of individualism. Durkheim argued that the emergence of the industrial society caused two problems: anomie and egoism. According to Durkheim, these problems signify the failure of the social network to control an individual's behaviour. According to Durkheim, this will lead to dysfunctional behaviour, such as suicide.

William Kornhauser applied this theory to social movements in his book *The Politics of Mass Society* (2008). He pointed out that modern democratic systems possess a distinct vulnerability to mass movements. He spells out and identifies the factors that tend to increase or decrease this vulnerability—not least the health and strength of elites. In this way, the book reveals new clues to the origin and nature of mass political movements.

Again, the classical approaches cover up two senses of relative deprivation or feeling of inequality, particularly in relation to others or in relation to the peoples' own expectations. In the first view, people see others having more socio-political and cultural power, economic strength, and

accordingly, attempts to acquire all those for themselves too. In the second view, people are more prone to movements and whenever a situation arises to improve their existing situation or stops improving, at that juncture, they will join movements to materialize their expectations. Here, we can discuss the works of James Davies, Ted Gurr and Denton Morrison.

Since 1960's, both Europe and the United States witnessed serious growth in the amount of social movement activities. Accordingly, the common perception against social movements also changed. People began to pursue greater demands for healthy democracy and essential policies to attain the goal of greater political participation. Though the classical approaches considered the structural issues to examine the growth of movements, growth also carried forward common welfare, which was hardly ignored. To consider this second thought, a contemporary theoretical approach has developed. The more American-centered structural approaches examined other factors like gender, ethnicity or sexuality as central to class struggle.

The Structural approaches often consider the political process as an opportunities that are significant in the field of social movement activity. Certain political situations stimulate the movement activities. Political opportunities such as growing political decision making powers, instability or conflict between the ruling elites, access to elite allies, decline of sate's capacity to repress dissent, etc. may be realized through political concessions, social movement participation, or social movement organizational founding.

One of the first needs to produce a social movement is organization. Duty of the organization is to acquire and deploy resources to attain their concerned objectives. When the participants of a social movement are highly organized, they are more likely to create organized forms of protests. They are quite efficient to mobilize and use the resources for their common goals. Such resources may be of material, moral, socio-organizational, human and cultural kind. Some versions of this theory state that movements operate similar to capitalist enterprises that make efficient use of the available resources.

Social Movement Impact theory deals with the individual, institutional, cultural and socio-political impacts of a social movement on the society. Methodologically, the theory often focused more on the worth of violent or non-violent modes, importance of political allies and elites, agencies running popular movements etc.

Social-constructivist approaches which emerged in Europe admit that the present movements are different from the past as because instead of engaging in the issue of labourers, class conflicts they deal more with civil rights, feminist issues, environmental causes, anti-warfare demands etc. Participants' causes are more socio-political today and this kind of motivation formulates the post-colonial politics, particularly, those created the new middle class. This scholastic school also influenced the prominent American scholars like Charles Tilly. In this regard, we will also look at the works of Ronald Inglehart, Jurgen Habermas, Alberto Melucci, Steve Buechler etc.

The 1990's social-movement studies developed the significance of cultures, emotions other than structural factors to analyse the pros and cons of social movements. Alberto Melucci's *Challenging Codes* (1996) and James M Jasper's *The Art of Moral Protest* (1997) are prominent works in this regard. Melucci focused on the creation of collective identities as the purpose of social movements, especially "the new social movements", whereas Jasper argued that movements provide participants with a chance to elaborate and articulate their moral intuitions and principles.

Broadly, the approaches of social movements follow either Marxist or non-Marxist framework for analysis. Again, Gandhian approach is another powerful approach to discuss social movements.

- **Marxian Approach**

It believes in revolutionary social change. It believes that class based social structure developed faulty economic structure. Here, bourgeoisie class is opposite to the labour class in terms of privileges and wealth. Bourgeoisie class used the institutions of state and society and their coercive means to control and exploit the labour class. With the development of this kind of capitalist structure, the labours unite themselves and launched planned protests against their capitalist authority and aim to bring radical socio-political change by removing them from the positions of power.

Thus, the adherents of Marxian approach emphasizes only on conflicting economic interests as vital to social movements. But, a group of them also admits that factors like ethnic, political, religious, cultural etc. are other significant issues behind social movements. Marxist school of thought however, developed that the members of movement have common consciousness regarding their socio-economic position and that ultimately lead them to organize social movement to fight for their cause. The subaltern school, on the other hand criticized the traditional Marxists for their negligence in history of the masses because they believe that history not always dependent on the powerful class. Again, the traditional Marxists school criticized subaltern theory on the ground of ignoring the structural factors and considers consciousness as independent of structural contradictions.

- **Liberal Approach**

There is no unanimity among the other non-Marxian schools of social movements. They have different views regarding the issues like need of social and political change, role of social movements etc. Liberal scholars like William Kornhauser, Robert Nisbet, Edward Shils etc. developed the opinion that mass societies produce mass movements having extremist and anti-democratic elements. These scholars advocate the exclusion of the masses from day-to-day involvement in politics, as it hampers the efficiency of the government.

- **Gandhian Approach**

Mahatma Gandhi adhered to non-violent means to end the British rule in India and launched a prolonged freedom movement. But he disapproved the frequent launching of mass agitations as he believed that it was dangerous and dysfunctional for civilized society.

Some people disapprove revolutionary change in the socio-political and economic structures. However, they are not against any political change to reform government and political institutions. Some people approve a revolutionary change. However, their analysis of class is different from that of Marxist scholars. They put thrust on political institutions and culture.

All the above discussion helps us to understand the approaches to social movements. It is important to develop that while classical approaches put more stress on structural weaknesses, the contemporary approaches are more prone to cultural identities, environmental and socio-political issues.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: The idea of reformation, resistance, oppression, dissatisfaction, demands for rights and socio-economic upliftment etc. are certain issues generating social movements. (Write True or False).

.....

Q.6: What do you mean by relative deprivation?

.....

Q.7: Name the author of the book "*The Crowd*" (1895).

.....

Q.8: Identify two conceptual approaches of social movements.

.....

.....

2.5 CAUSES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

The causes of social movements are significant in the context of bringing socio-economic reforms, developments, resistance and many more. Social unrest, discomfort, dissatisfaction, descent, need for better socio-economic rights and security are certain matters that bring forth social movements to the limelight. Some of those are discussed in the following:

1. A group of social scientists believes that social movements do not occur in vacuum. It is social unrest which gives rise to a social movement. The unrest may be caused by factors such as- cultural drift. In course of cultural drift, people change their existing values and ideas and develop new ideas. In order to operationalise those ideas, people organize social movements. The development of a democratic society, the emancipation of women, the spread of mass education,

the removal of untouchability, equality of opportunity for both the sexes, growth of secularism are the examples of such movements.

2. Sometimes uneven social developments lead to social disorganization. It generally happens when one part/region of a country change more rapidly and other parts are lagging behind. Industrialization, urbanization are some of the reasons behind the same. Such reasons cause social discomfort or disorganization and stimulate the formulation of social movements.

3. In the transitory period between old traditional values shifting towards the new modern updates, individuals become rootless. They are in confusion and uncertainly and their feel alienated from the society. The individuals feel insecure, confused and frustrated. These conditions produce social movements.

4. The feelings of social injustice lead the people towards frustration and alienation. Any group, at any status level, may feel that they are the victim of social injustice. High taxation, protective discrimination etc. are the examples that create the feelings of social injustice among different sections. The feelings of injustice may not occur only among the poor sections and marginalized but among the rich sections too. Social injustice is a subjective value judgment. A social system is unjust when it is so perceived by its members and such feelings may lead to frustration and ultimately social movements to serve their needs. Thus, it is significant to remember that in a stable, well integrated society, there are fewer chances of tensions and social movements are usually rare in such systems. The complex modern society is more troubled by social movements as the people have more distress and tensions in comparison to the traditional societies.

5. Some groups of people are more prone to social movements. They may be alienated or the socially disintegrated groups, marginal groups, groups isolated from the family, community, groups which face socio-economic insecurity, groups which are maladjusted etc. They usually resort more to social movements to satisfy their issues. Thus, the homeless people or who misfit in the society become the supporters

of mass movement. It may also be noted that some people join the social movements for reasons unrelated to the movements' objectives. Some of them are like flying bees and others may join movements for attaining the power or satisfaction of one's own interest rather than to promote the goals of the movement. It may again be focused that, the small scale social movements having less foundational strength mainly face this kind of problems.

However, it is significant to note that each full grown social movement develops a chain of processes from unrest to excitement, excitement to formalization and from formation to institutionalization. Relative deprivation, emotional and cultural identity crisis, need for reforms, resistance etc. are the causes behind its occurrence and growth.

- **The outcomes of social movements**

As the social movements are collective attempts to change, restructure and resist the social order and change, we cannot conclude its outcome analysis only on the lines of its success and failure. Failure of social movements may take place due to the aspects like a participants' declining trust on the leadership of the movement, suppression of the movement, disintegration among the leadership of the movement, organizational failure etc. Again, success is vital when the movement enables to grasp spontaneous and active participation from a strong voiced group for a longer period. When the movement is run by a legitimized authority and if successfully manages power relation amongst its members, then there are very less chance of diversion and failure. Sometimes, the movement becomes institutionalized and later on it enables to attain or influence the political system at a large scale. For example, the struggle for Independence of India led by the Indian National Congress during the British rule enabled them to hold political power after the Independence. But, this kind of grand success of social movements only occur when mass participation and faith on leadership is very strong.

In addition to it, the social movement impact theory also known as the outcome theory focuses on examining the impacts of the social

movements on society, as well as on its different levels. Again, it studies the factors leading to those effects. The outcomes of social movements can be again analysed in terms of the following ways:

1. The individuals' psychological and emotional issues are mostly affected by the aspects of social movements. The participants actively join in the movement, share the values, ideas as well as burdens. They foster further activism collectively that develops their psychological attachment among themselves.
2. At the Institutional level, social movements targeted the non-state institutions. Some social movements are centered around the workplace of the labourers such as labour movements or co-operative movements. Rapid growth in terms of money and members of one institution, diffuseness or decentralization of organization, strength of links between clients and professionals and ties with the state etc. are certain institution specific characters that are more likely to get involved in movements.
3. Culture in the form of art, literature, writings etc. is mostly used by the participants of a movement to popularize their ideological framework and to attain more and more support. It is constantly used to generate more awareness amongst the participants.
4. Political changes are also achieved through the movements. Successful social movements are often been able to influence, reframe political issues and policies in order to attain their movement objectives.

Besides, we have witnessed social movements both at the individual and societal level attempting to secure bigger or smaller changes. While the reformative movements result in social upliftment, upgradation of available socio-political and economic structure to secure better life standard, revolutionary movements are aimed to bring radical changes which deny the state system. Similarly, alternative movements seek certain changes in the individual and social behaviour and redemptive movements brings changes in the socio-religious nature.

Since the mid-1970's, however, scholars have put immense interest in studying the ways regarding how the social movements generate changes at different levels. Political, biographical and cultural outcomes are more prominent in this regard. Here, political outcomes bring changes in the political environment of the movement, biographical outcomes consider the changes brought in the life course of the participants of the movement and cultural outcomes alter their broad cultural environment in the form of history, Art, literature etc.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.9: The causes of social movements are significant in the field of bringing socio-economic reforms, developments, resistance and many more. (Write True or False).

.....

Q.10: Social unrest may be caused by factors like cultural …….. (Fill in the Blank).

Q.11: Examine the main causes behind the occurrence of social movement. (Within 50 words)

.....

.....



2.6 LET US SUM UP

- Social movements are of different types marked by its objectives, way of protest, expansion and scope. Sociologist David Aberle (1966) made a distinction among social movements based on what they want to change and how much change they want.
- Movements can again be classified into revolutionary type, religious/ redemptive type, alternative type, resistance type etc.
- Stages of social movements include the study on the life cycle of social movements. Generally, in the Indian context, movements are in the form of reform movement, resistance movement, peasants' movements,

women's movement, dalit movement, backward caste movements etc.

- Issues such as the idea of reformation, resistance, oppression, dissatisfaction, demands for rights and socio-economic upliftment etc. are significant behind the emergence of social movements.
- We can identify a list of determinants of social movements marked by individual and psychological factors, ideological dimensions etc. In addition to it, a number of social movement theories under the classical and modern approaches are to be talked about to understand the factors and issues of social movements.
- The classical approaches that believe in some casual mechanism emerged at the turn of the century. It believes that the sources of social movements are structural constrains.
- Structural approaches consider the political process and opportunities which are significant in the field of social movement activity. Certain political situations stimulate the movement activities.
- It is important to develop that while classical approaches put more stress on structural weaknesses, the contemporary approaches are more prone to cultural identities, environmental and socio-political issues.
- Causes of social movements are significant in the field of bringing socio-economic reforms, developments, resistance and many more. Social unrest, discomfort, dissatisfaction, descent, opt for better socio-economic rights and security are certain matters that bring forth social movements in the limelight.
- Feeling of injustice, alienation, deprivation, cultural drift, social disintegration, relative deprivation, emotional and cultural identity crisis, needs to have reforms, resistance etc. are the causes behind the occurrence and growth of social movements.



2.7 FURTHER READING

1) Blau, J. R. (Ed.). (2004). *The Blackwell companion to Sociology.* USA: Blackwell.

2) Chesters, G. and Welsh, I. (2011). *Social movements: The key concepts.* London: Routledge.

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4) Giugni, M., Bosi, L. and Uba, K. (2013). *Outcomes of social movements and protest activities*. In Oxford Bibliographies in "Political Science". DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199756223-0037

Web links/e-resources:

https://alagappauniversity.ac.in>...PDF

https://courses.lumenlearning.com/alamo-sociology-sociology/chapter/reading-types-and-stages-of-social-movements/

https://www.sociologyguide.com/social-change/social-movements-type.php

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2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Sociologist David Aberle (1966)

Ans to Q No 2: Local, national and global level

Ans to Q No 3: True

Ans to Q No 4: Movements can be classified into revolutionary type, religious/redemptive type, alternative type, resistance type etc. Revolutionary movements seek to completely change every aspect of a society. Religious or Redemptive movements attempt to change the inner spiritual feelings of individuals. Alternative movements are focused on self-improvement and limited, specific changes to individual beliefs and behaviour. Resistance movements seek to prevent or undo change to the social structure. Another type may be the reactionary movements and they try to block social change or to reverse social changes that have already been achieved. Besides, we have seen the self-help movements; where people try to improve aspects of their personal lives.

Ans to Q No 5: True

Ans to Q No 6: Relative deprivation refers to a situation when the people feel themselves more deprived in terms of the opportunities and privileges than others and in terms of one's own expectations.

Ans to Q No 7: Gustave LeBon, is the author of the book *The Crowd*. (1895)

Ans to Q No 8: Relative deprivation and resource mobilization are two significant conceptual formulations to explain social movements. Relative deprivation is a kind of negative feeling that brings people towards the situation of difference between people's wants and actualities. Accordingly, the members feel that they deserve more rights, wealth, power, status and many more. Gradually, their frustration reached an upper limit and they lost their faith in conventional means. Therefore, to attain their aim, the group will organize into a social movement. Resource mobilization is another approach to study how the social movements mobilize their organizational outlet, mass media, person, money and material etc. Effectiveness and failure of the movement is related to all the said resources and their fruitful uses. Here, the

leadership of the movement takes the utmost responsibility to mobilize all these aspects.

Ans to Q No 9: True

Ans to Q No 10: Cultural Drift

Ans to Q No 11: Causes of social movements are significant in the field of bringing socio-economic reforms, developments, resistance and many more. Social unrest, discomfort, dissatisfaction, descent, hope for better socio-economic rights and security are certain matters that bring forth social movements to the limelight. The feeling of injustice, alienation, deprivation, cultural drift, social disintegration, relative deprivation, emotional and cultural identity crisis, need for reforms, resistance etc. are the causes behind its occurrence and growth.



2.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : What are the stages of social movements?

Q. 2 : Mention one significant determinant of social movement.

Q. 3 : Name one social movement theory that had emerged in the wake of fascist and communist movements.

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

Q. 1 : Discuss the stages and types of social movements.

Q. 2 : Discuss the classical and contemporary approaches of social movements.

Q. 3 : Mention different views about the classical approaches of social movement.

C) Long Questions (answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q. 1 : Assess the outcomes of social movements.

Q. 2 : Comprehensively discuss the causes of social movements.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 3: IDEOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Ideology of Social Movements

- 3.3.1 Nature of Social Movements
- 3.3.2 Classifications of Social Movements
- 3.3.3 Theories of Social Movements

3.4 Distinguishing Social Movements from Social Institutions and Social Associations

3.5 Organizational and Leadership Dynamics of Social Movement

3.6 Role of Leadership in Social Movements

3.7 Let Us Sum Up

3.8 Further Reading

3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.10 Possible Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of social movements
- discuss the differences between social movements and other social institutions.
- explain the role of leadership in social movements.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Social movements are an integral part of any democratic society because not only they bring about a certain degree of state accountability, but also provide 'space' to the individuals and groups to advance interests which are beyond individual concerns. Social movements are more than just protest movements, but they must be seen in a positive context wherein

they contribute to the change and reforms of social and political institutions, hence it will lead to a better future for all. Essentially, a social movement is a form of collective action where people and communities seek to bring about change in societal as well as political issues. The nature of social movements has changed over the years and it plays a critical role in the protection of individual liberties, addressing social change and community concerns, redressing public grievances, advancing the cause of 'common goods' and looking into issues of economic development. This unit will introduce you to the concept of social movements and their importance in influencing the society as well as state policies.

3.3 IDEOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The study of social movements has gained momentum over the last few decades. There has been an upsurge in collective action by various groups and communities across the globe and they seek to address issues that are varied- which range from anti-globalisation movements, anti-nuclear movements, peace movements, rights for the LGBTQ , environmental movements, civil rights movements etc.

Important Social Movements	
Civil Rights Movement	Perhaps the most famous civil rights activist in the U.S. is Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who led a nonviolent movement for change in the 1950s and early 1960s. He advocated for protests, grassroots organizing, and civil disobedience in place of violent activism.
LGBTQ Rights Movement	Brenda Howard is known as the "Mother of Pride." A bisexual and polyamorous woman from New York City, Brenda organized the first Pride parade in 1970 and popularized the use of the word "pride" in LGBT circles.
Internal Resistance Against Apartheid	Also called Madiba, Nelson Mandela is revered in South Africa for his resistance against the apartheid state.
The Environmental Movement	The environmental movement began in the 1950s with concern over water and air safety, as well as nuclear non-proliferation. After an oil spill in Santa Barbara in 1969, the U.S. government passed the National Environmental Policy Act in 1970. In the same year, the Environmental Protection Agency was created and the first Earth Day took place.

Important Social Movements	
Peace movements	It encompasses Anti-war movements, Human rights movements, Anti-Nuclear Movements which have taken place at different times across the globe.

Such movements have taken place across different continents and governments of the world and it has been found difficult to ignore as well as suppress such voices.

Defining social movements:

Social movements can be thought of as collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels for the purpose of challenging or defending extant authority, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part.

David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi,

The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements, Blackwell Publishing, USA, p. 11

Social movements encompass various forms of collective mobilizations and each of these seek to address change or bring about reforms in the existing social, economic and political conditions. Therefore, defining social movements is a laborious and complex task. But, such movements do reflect people's perceptions towards the system.

3.3.1 Nature of Social Movements

Regarding the nature of social movements, the following points may be mentioned:

- **Form of collective action:** Social movements are a form of collective action. It is different from a crowd, gang or an interest group. As a form of collective action, it is 'goal oriented', in pursuit of some common goal through joint action.
- **Collective behaviour:** Social movements may be institutionalized or non-institutionalized. Traditionally, social movements encompasses non-institutional collective action, which include protests , marches, demonstrations, dharna and dissent.

- **Interest groups:** Social movements overlap certain interest groups too. Interests groups often raise important issues which affect society and politics in a variety of ways. While interest groups are mainly associated with politics and political processes, social movements are much wider in scope. Interest groups further their interests through institutionalized means, but social movements adopt a variety of methods to achieve their goals, which include the use of non-institutional means too. However, over a period of years, social movements become more institutionalized and some begin to look as well as behave as interest groups too.
- **'Challengers to' as well as 'defenders of' status-quo:** While some social movements want to alter the existing conditions, some are status -quoist by nature. But the bigger debate is about-change, but at what level? What is the area of change that social movements try to influence-individual , societal or institutional or global reforms? Social movements encompass 'contentious politics' wherein 'collective political struggle' becomes a key tool in achieving political and social reforms.
- **Organised activity:** It involves pursuit of goals through joint action. It also implies that there has to be an organization framework which will shape the nature of struggle and will give direction to the movement. Leadership plays an important role in social movements. But all social movements need not have a structure; it is essentially a 'network of interaction between different actors', and whether it may have an formal institutional framework or not, largely depends on the goals and the nature of circumstances.
- **Temporal continuity:** All social movements have some degree of temporal continuity, rather than being purely ad-hoc or temporary in character. Social movements tend to last a little longer and some may continue through phases of 'cycle of protest'. It is rather a sustained kind of collective activity wherein larger goals are addressed.

Social movements: key features

Social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action. They do the following-

- They are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents;
- They are linked by dense informal networks;
- They share a distinct collective identity.

Donatella Della Porta & Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction,* Blackwell Publishing, USA, 2006, p.20

Social movements vary in nature, scope, goals and organization. Some movements may be pure transitory, but some are multifaceted and often become major players in domestic as well an international politics.

Key similarities between different movements:

- **The campaign:** all movements carry out sustained actions with an orientation towards specific goals ;
- **Social movement repertoires:** a standard set of actions that are used by social movements i.e. protests, rallies, etc. and
- **Displays of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (WUNC):** WUNC displays are carried out by social movements and social movement organizations (SMOs) in order to legitimize themselves in the eyes of potential adherents and target authorities (Tilly, 2004).

Editors of Salem Press, Theories of Social Movements, Salem Press, California, 2011 p.4

3.3.2 Classification of Social Movements

Social change occurs at different levels. David Aberle in his The Peyote Religion Among the Navaho (1966) 'differentiates social movements based both on the amount of change and the locus or level of change sought.'

		Locus of Change	
		Individual	**Social structure**
Amount of Change	**Partial**	**Alternative movements-** which began forming in the 1960s, are characterized by countercultural values, the rejection of materialism, and the development of unconventional lifestyles.	**Reformative movements-** work to create partial societal change in order to address injustices and inequalities. Reformative movements tend to have as their stated goal a

		Locus of Change	
		Individual	**Social Structure**
Amount of Change			desire to foster and promote positive change and achieve a just social order. Reformative movements tend to be single issue movements. Example: The Umbanda religious movement (Brazil).
	Total	**Redemptive movements-** seek a total change in individuals. Personal recovery movements, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, are popular examples of redemptive movements.	**Transformative movements-** such as radical political groups, work for total or complete structural change. They may participate in violent action to achieve change and may anticipate the coming of a cataclysmic change. Example Ku Klux Klan. (USA)

Although movements seldom fit neatly into one of the four types, they are typically skewed more in one direction than another along the two-change dimensions.[1]

3.3.3 Theories of Social Movements

- **Relative Deprivation Theory:** A common thread in the literature is that RD is a perceived discrepancy between expectations and reality.[2] Sociologist Samuel A. Stouffer (1900-1960) is credited with developing relative deprivation theory after World War II. Relative deprivation theory refers to the idea that feelings of depriva-tion and discontent are related to a desired point of reference (i.e. refer-ence groups).

  Relative deprivation theory argues that it is not merely inequality that leads to movement emergence, but subjective perceptions of inequality.[3] W.G. Runciman in *Relative deprivation and social justic*e (1966) makes an important

distinction between egoistic and fraternal relative deprivation. 'Egoistic relative deprivation is sensed when individuals feel unfairly deprived in comparison to other individuals. Fraternal relative deprivation is felt by members of a social category when they believe that their group as a whole is denied a deserved outcome.'[4] Relative deprivation theory laid down the foundation of multiple theories of social psychology including frustration-aggression theory, social comparison theory, equity theory, and reference group theory. The civil rights movement in the U.S. was born because before that movement non-white people were "deprived" of basic rights and privileges that their white counterparts enjoyed.

- **Resource Mobilisation Theory:** The three traditional approaches to understanding social movements - relative deprivation theory, mass society theory, and collective behavior theory - are united by their efforts to understand the individual problems that arise from social change. Developed in the 1960s, Resource mobilization theory offers an alternative to this view by focusing on the economic and political variables that can give rise to social movements. In moving the emphasis from 'why' movements mobilise, to 'how' they mobilise, resource mobilisation theorists shifted the emphasis of movement analysis away from structural factors and towards organisational questions.[5]

  J.C. Jenkins highlights the key arguments:

  (a) movement actions are rational, adaptive responses to the costs and rewards of different lines of action;

  (b) the basic goals of movements are defined by conflicts of interest built into institutionalized power relations;

  (c) the grievances generated by such conflicts are sufficiently ubiquitous and the formation and mobilization of movements depend on changes in resources, group organization, and opportunities for collective action;

(d) centralized, formally structured movement organizations are more typical of modem social movements and more effective at mobilizing resources and mounting sustained challenges than decentralized, informal movement structures; and

(e) the success of movements is largely determined by strategic factors and the political processes in which they become enmeshed.[6]

- **Structural-strain Theory:** Largely based on Emile Durkheim's theory of anomie, the structural-strain theory was further developed by Robert Merton in the 1930s. This theory argues that 'the frustration and stress caused by goal blockage increases the likelihood of deviance, crimi-nality, and delinquency'. In conjunction to structural strain theory, there is also a Value added theory. It argues that:

  Strain refers to the cycle of inadequate regulation at the societal level that negatively impacts how the individual perceives his or her needs, means, and opportunities. Value-added theory of collec-tive behavior argues that individuals join hostile and radical social move-ments because they experience social strain. Social movements develop to reassure members that action is being taken to address strain, grievances, and deprivation [6]7

  According to N.J.Smelser (Theory of Collective Behavior, 1965):

  The theory advocates that any nascent social movement needs six factors to grow. These six factors are: people in a society experience some type of problem (deprivation); recognition by people of that society that this problem exists; an ideology purporting to be a solution for the problem develops and spreads its influence; an event or events transpire that convert this nascent movement into a bona fide social movement; the society (and its government) is open to change for the movement to be effective (if not, then the movement might die out); and mobilization of resources takes place as the movement develops further.[8]

- **New Social Movement Theory:** Whereas traditional movements and Marxian movements were addressing issues of economic disparities and its challenges, new social movement theories (NSMT) seek to address issues of collective identity *e.g.* anti-war, ethnicity, gender, civil rights and sexuality etc. Largely influenced by the works of Jurgen Habermas and Alain Touraine, NSM has gained momentum and it encompasses women's rights movement, the environmental movement, and the anti-corporate, anti-globalization movement.

The growth of NSM have been analysed by eminent scholars. According to Alberto Melucci, new social movements reach out and appeal to supporters with offers of identity and belonging. This occurs primarily because of :

- The transition in the West from industrial to postindustrial society;
- The rise of the new middle class[9]

Claus Offe considers new social movements to be non-institutional in nature and recognizes that new social movements and tra-ditional social movements continue to compete for membership and notice.

The rise of a new middle class, comprised of highly educated, economically secure individuals, is associated with the development of new social movements. The new middle class is thought to be particularly sympathetic to the issues advanced by issue-based movements including the peace movement, en-vironmental movement, women's movement and civil-rights movement.[10]

Jurgen Habermas argues that new social movements develop from the tension between system integration (i.e. the steering mechanisms of a society) and social integration (i.e. forces of socialization, meaning-production, and val-ue-formation). New social movements form at the intersection of the larger social and political system and people's lived experiences.[11]

Nine Theses on Social Movements

1.The social movements are not new, even if they have some new features, and the 'classical ones' are relatively new and perhaps temporary;

2. Social movements display much variety and changeability, but have in common individual mobilization through a sense of morality and (in)justice and social power through social mobilization against deprivation and for survival and identity;

3. The strength and importance of social movements is cyclical and related to long political-economic and (perhaps associated) ideological cycles. When the conditions that give rise to the movements change (through the action of the movements themselves and/or more usually due to changing circumstances), the movements tend to disappear;

4. It is important to distinguish the class composition of social movements, which are mostly middle class in the West, popular/working class in the South, and some of each in the East;

5. There are many different kinds of social movements. The majority seek more autonomy rather than state power, and the latter tend to negate themselves as social movements;

6. Although most social movements are more defensive than offensive and tend to be temporary, they are important (today and tomorrow perhaps the most important) agents of social transformation;

7. In particular, social movements appear as the agents and re-interpreters of delinking from contemporary capitalism and transition to socialism;

8. Some social movements are likely to overlap in membership or be more compatible and permit coalition with others, and some are likely to conflict and compete with others. It may be useful to inquire into these relations;

9. However, since social movements, like street theatre, write their own scripts - if any - as they go along, any prescription of agendas or strategies, let alone tactics, by outsiders - not to mention intellectuals - is likely to be irrelevant at best and counterproductive at worst.

Frank, A. G., & Fuentes, M. (1987).

Nine Theses On Social Movements. Thesis Eleven, 18-19(1), pp.143-165.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are the key features of social movements?

.....

.....

Q.2: What is collective behaviour?

.....

.....

Q.3: With which sociologist is the 'theory of anomie' associated with?

.....

Q.4: Write a short note on key similarities between different social movements. (within 50 words).

.....

.....

3.4 DISTINGUISHING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS FROM SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Social institutions are a complex set of values and norms that define roles and relationship between the individual, society and state. Social institutions act in different ways as they constrain as well as reward behaviour. 'Macro' social institutions like the state can determine the roles as well influence the socialization process of the individual. 'Micro' social institutions like the 'family' greatly influence the individual in determining 'life choices' and upbringing. However, most social institutions largely reflect the interests of the 'dominant classes' and as such creates unique challenges for all.

Social organizations are a form of social collectivities and they are identifiable groups that have a specific purpose. They may be 'formal' or 'informal' or organizations. Government organisations are 'formal' entities for it involves a hierarchical structure, rules and regulations. Another form of formal organization, utilitarian organizations, are those people join to gain some material benefit. Taking a job at a bank or hospital constitutes joining a utilitarian organization.[12]

However, there are 'informal' organisations which are not based on any such rules or regulations, but over the years, through norms and value system, such informal organisations become 'rigid'. There are also voluntary organisations, example- clubs, unions etc. which are also looking to address certain issues, which too may have a structure and specialized people may

be engaged who are pursuing the goals of such organisations. The importance of social associations arises from the fact that it encourages 'civic participation' and 'civic engagement'.

What makes social movements distinguishable from social institutions and social associations is that such movements try to address a bigger cause and seek to put forward the grievances and needs of the masses in the public domain. Grievances, resources, and opportunities are important factors that generate social movements.[13] Through active engagement and negotiations with state agencies, social movements push forward communitarian goals rather than individual needs. Though voluntary, people identify with a certain cause or show solidarity towards a particular issue, and hence they become part of such a movement. People do participate in social movements because it gives them an opportunity to challenge or propagate the status quo. Social movements are much broader in scope when compared to interest or pressure groups. Very often interests and pressure groups become part of a greater movement.

3.5 ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Stages of social movement: One of the earliest scholars to study social movement processes was Herbert Blumer, who identified four stages of social movements' lifecycles. The four stages he described were: "social ferment," "popular excitement," "formalization," and "institutionalization". Scholars have refined and renamed these stages but the underlying themes have remained relatively constant.

Four Stages of Social Movement	
First Stage: Emergence	● The first stage of the social movement life cycle is also known as the "social ferment" stage by Herbert Blumer. ● This is a very preliminary stage and there is little to no organization; ● Issues are raised by agitators and general awareness is created amongst the masses.

Four Stages of Social Movement	
Second Stage: Coalescence	● Also known as the "popular stage", it is clearly characterized by a feeling of discontentment amongst the masses. ● This stage is about finding out 'responsibilities'. ● At this point leadership emerges and strategies for success are worked out. ● Mass demonstrations may also come to the forefront. ● During this stage, social movements are more organized and strategic in their outlook.
Third Stage: Bureaucratization	● H. Blumer defines this stage as "formalization," and is characterized by higher levels of organization and coalition based strategies. ● Specialised staff is appointed. ● During this stage, social movements become more powerful as regularly they meet with political elites.
Fourth Stage: Decline	● Excessive bureaucratization also leads to emotional disconnect with the masses. Greater 'institutionalization' can have different types of impacts and may decline too. ● According to Miller (1999) -there are four ways in which social movements can decline: o Repression, o Co-optation, o Success, and o Failure ● Another critical reason for the decline is that such movements become part of the mainstream agenda and the issues raised by such movements is no longer seen as a challenge to the ruling establishment. Rather the state promotes such causes. Effectively, their goals or ideologies are adopted by the mainstream and there is no longer any need for a movement



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: According to Blumer, what are the four stages of social movements?

.....

Q.6: What is 'social ferment' stage?

.....

Q.7: Differentiate between social movements, social institutions and social organisations. (50 words).

.....

.....

3.6 ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Morris and Staggenborg have highlighted that 'Leaders are strategic decision-makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements'. 'Leaders are critical to social movements because-

- they inspire commitment,
- mobilize resources,
- create and recognize opportunities,
- devise strategies,
- frame demands,
- and influence outcomes.'[14]

Scholars have pointed out that the importance of the leader in social movements is because such a person acts a 'mobilizer' that inspires participants and also an 'articulator' who links the movement to the larger society.[15] The course and success of any social movements is largely dependent of 'charismatic leadership'. The 'personality' of the leader , the loyalty of 'followers' towards their leader and to the cause, all play a significant role in shaping the course of a social movement. Leaders create the impetus for movements by providing examples of action, directing action, and defining problems and proposing solutions. However, works done by several scholars also reflect that the leaders of social movements also become 'elitist' over a period of years and digress from the original goals.

Robert Michels: Theory of political leadership

Followers willingly cede agency to their leaders. The masses are grateful to leaders for speaking and acting on their behalf, even though leaders become political elites whose interests conflict with those of their followers. Leaders become part of the power elite, more concerned with organizational maintenance than the original goals of the movement.

Effectively, as Morris and Staggenborg note in their work in The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements (2004) elaborate:

> Leaders operate within structures, and they both influence and are influenced by movement organization and environment. They are found at

different levels, performing numerous and varied functions. Leaders sometimes pursue their own interests and maintain organizations at the expense of movement goals, but different organizational structures produce different types of leaders, including some who work to advance movement goals over their own interests. Different types of leaders may dominate at different stages of movement development and sometimes come into conflict with one another…..

Moreover, we need to be aware that there is a vertical ordering of leadership in most social movements. When women are excluded from top positions they are separated from a considerable amount of power wielded by top movement leaders.

However, there were leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr. etc, who were able to push forward the demands of the community and shape the future of their own country. The literature on leadership of social movements reflects that-

- **Social Background:** social movement leaders tend to come from the educated middle and upper classes, are disproportionately male, and usually share the race or ethnicity of their supporters;
- **Educational capital:** Studies of movement and revolutionary leaders in poor and non-Western countries also suggest that a majority of them either come from the middle and upper classes or have more education than their followers and 'educational capital' is the key resource that social movement leaders derive from their privileged backgrounds.
- **Improvisation, innovation and coalition building:** Leaders of social movements are characterized by creativity and artful experimentation;

improvisation of the same with education and intellectual thinking, leaders play an important role in 'framing grievances and formulating ideologies, debating, interfacing with media, writing, orating, devising strategies and tactics, creatively synthesizing information gleaned from local, national, and international venues, dialoguing with internal and external elites, improvising and innovating, developing rationales for coalition building.

- **Women leaders as 'bridge leaders:** Robnett argues that women often function in the role of ''bridge leader,'' which she defines as ''an intermediate layer of leadership, whose task includes bridging potential constituents and adherents, as well as potential formal leaders to the movement''.

- **Political entrepreneurs:** Resource mobilization theorists have viewed leaders as political entrepreneurs who mobilize resources and found organizations in response to incentives, risks, and opportunities; supporters are seen as rational actors who follow effective leaders.[16]

- **Movements and Protests:** With the growth of social media, communications and new age technologies, the forms, nature and purpose of collective action too have undergone a major change. New methods of protests, new issues to protest over and resistance to state domination have come to the forefront. Pro-democracy movements, identity movements and strengthening of transnational human right network led by international NGOs have ensured that states become more accountable to the people.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.8: Martin Luther King Jr., the civil right activist, is from which country?

.....

Q.9: Why are leaders critical to any social movements? Mention any two reasons.

.....

.....

Q.10: Write very briefly on Robert Michel's 'theory of leadership'.

.....

.....

Anti-establishment movements/ Protest Movements	
Tunisia: **Jasmine Revolution**	This movement took place in Tunisia in 2011, where the people protested against corruption, poverty and political repression. It finally led forced Pres. Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali to step down from office in January 2011.This movement inspired similar movements across the Middle East and North Africa.
Middle East : **Arab Spring**	2010-11 witnessed the 'Arab Spring' which comprised a series of pro-democracy protests and uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. Anti-government protests took part in different parts of Middle East, which include- Jasmine Revolution (Tunisia), Egypt Uprising of 2011, Yemen Uprising of 2011-12, Libya Revolt of 2011, and Syria Uprising of 2011-12. Authoritarian regimes were challenged and demonstrators faced violent crackdown by their own security forces.
Hong Kong: **Pro-democracy protests**	One Country, Two Systems arrangement (1997) between China and Hong Kong never really addressed the issue of political freedoms and rights of people of Hong Kong. In 2019, the introduction of extradition amendment law sparked political unrest. Though this controversial law was withdrawn, tensions still remain between Hong Kong and China.

Whereas the earlier movements were primarily concerned about economic injustices and labour rights, contemporary movements question the existing structures as well as hierarchy of the state. The issue of state accountability and political reforms has rocked the Middle East as well as

Hong Kong. Civil wars and conflict have engulfed many states in the Middle East. The people who control the political space in the Middle-East and other such regions of the world, seldom accept the need for reforms and in most cases reforms have been rather too slow. Protest participation has come to stay and this has become the dominant mode of resisting the state authority.



3.7 LET US SUM UP

- Essentially a social movement is a form of collective action where people and communities seek to bring about change in societal as well as political issues.
- Social movements may encompass anti-globalisation movements, anti-nuclear movements, peace movements, rights for the LGBTQ , environmental movements, civil rights movements etc.
- Social movements are a form of collective action but it is different from a crowd, gang or an interest group.
- Herbert Blumer identified four stages of social movements' cycle.
- New social movements have gained momentum and it includes women's rights movement, the environmental movement, and the anti-corporate, anti-globalization movement.
- Leaders are strategic decision-makers who inspire and organize others to participate in social movements.
- Whereas earlier movements were primarily concerned about economic injustices and labour rights, contemporary movements question the existing structures as well as hierarchy of the state. Protest movements have become very dominant today.



3.8 FURTHER READING

1) Berch, B. (Ed.). (2019). *The palgrave handbook of social movements, revolution, and social transformation.* USA: Palgrave Macmillan.

2) Blau, J. R. (Ed.). (2004). *The blackwell companion to sociology.* USA: Blackwell.

3) Chesters, G. and Welsh, I. (2011). *Social movements: The key concepts.* London: Routledge.

4) McAdam, D. and Snow, D. A. (2010). *Readings on social movements.* New York: Oxford University Press.

5) Snow, D. A., Soule, S. A., and Kriesi, H. (Ed.). (2004). *The blackwell companion to social movements.* USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.



3.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors are engaged in collective action. They do the following-

- They are involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents;
- They are linked by dense informal networks;
- They share a distinct collective identity.

Ans to Q No 2: Traditionally, social movements encompass non-institutional collective action, which include protests, marches, demonstrations, dharna and dissent.

Ans to Q No 3: Emile Durkheim

Ans to Q No 4: The key similarities between different social movements are:

- The campaign: all movements carry out sustained actions with an orientation towards specific goals ;
- Social movement repertoires: a standard set of actions that are used by social movements i.e. protests, rallies, etc. and
- Displays of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (WUNC):

Ans to Q No 5: The four stages are social ferment," "popular excitement," "formalization," and "institutionalization".

Ans to Q No 6: This is a very preliminary stage and there is little to no organization; Issues are raised by the agitators and general awareness is created amongst the masses.

Ans to Q No 7: Social institutions are a complex set of values and norms that define roles and relationship between the individual, society and state; Social organizations are a form of social collectivities, formal or informal, and they are identifiable groups that have a specific purpose. Movements try to address a bigger cause and seek to put forward the grievances and needs of the masses in the public domain.

Ans to Q No 8: USA

Ans to Q No 9: Leasers are important because-

- they inspire commitment,
- they mobilize resources

Ans to Q No 10: According to this theory, the masses are grateful to leaders for speaking and acting on their behalf, even though leaders become political elites whose interests conflict with those of their followers. Leaders become part of the power elite, more concerned with organizational maintenance than the original goals of the movement.



3.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : Write the meaning of Ideology of Social Movements.

Q. 2 : What is the 'Nine Theses on Social Movements"?

B) Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

Q. 1 : Write a note on the different types of social movements.

Q. 2 : Discuss the nature of social movements.

Q. 3 : Write a note on the relative deprivation theory.

C) Long Questions (Answer within 300-500 words)

Q. 1 : Explain the importance of leadership in social movements.

Q. 2 : Discuss the differences between social movements and other social institutions.

End notes:

[1] Doug McAdam and David A. Snow, Readings on Social Movements, Oxford University Press, New York, 2010, p.2.

[2] J. N. Gurney, & K. J. Tierney, Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research. The Sociological Quarterly, 23(1), 1982,p.34.

[3] D. Clayton, 'Peoples Classical and Contemporary Conventional Theories of Social Movements' in Berch Berberoglu (ed) The Palgrave Handbook of Social Movements, Revolution, and Social Transformation, Palgrave Macmillan , USA, 2019, p.23

[4] M.Schmitt, J.Maes, & K. Widaman, (2010). Longitudinal effects of egoistic and fraternal relative deprivation on well-being and protest. International Journal of Psychology, 45(2) 2010, p.123; W. G. Runciman, Relative deprivation and social justice, Routledge, London, 1966.

[5] Graeme Chesters and Ian Welsh , Social Movements, The Key Concepts, Routledge , London, 2011, p.148.

[6] J. C. Jenkins, 'Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements', Annual Review of Sociology, 9(1), 1983, p.528.

[7] Simone I. Flynn , 'New Social Movement Theories' in Theories of Social Movements, Salem Press, California, 2011, pp.134- 144. ; S. Weeber, & D. Rodeheaver, 'Militias at the millennium: A test of Smelser's theory of collective behavior', Sociological Quarterly, 44(2), 2003, pp.181-205.

[8] Anindya SEN & Ömer AVC , Why Social Movements Occur: Theories of Social Movements , The Journal of Knowledge Economy & Knowledge Management / Volume: XI SPRING, p.128

[9] Ibid., p.93

[10] Ibid., pp.92-93

[11] Ibid. , pp.94-95

[12] Kathy S. Stolley, The Basics of Sociology, Greenwood Press, London, 2005, p.93

[13] Bert Klandermans , 'Why Social Movements Come into Being and Why People Join Them' in Judith R. Blau (ed)The Blackwell Companion to Sociology, 2004, USA, p.276.

[14] David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, Hanspeter Kriesi (ed) The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements , Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004.

[15] Aldon D. Morris and Suzanne Staggenborg, Leadership in Social Movements in David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, Hanspeter Kriesi (ed) The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p.171-172.

[16] Ibid., p.171-178.

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UNIT 4: DURKHEIM'S CONCEPT OF ANOMIE; CONCEPT OF RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Theories of Social Movements

4.4 Anomie Theory and Durkheim's Concept of Anomie

4.5 Concept of Relative Deprivation

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

4.7 Further Reading

4.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.9 Possible Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- analyse the contribution of Durkheim to sociological theory
- understand the concept of social movements
- comprehend the idea of anomie
- understand the concept of relative deprivation

4.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to Emile Durkheim (15 April 1858 – 15 November 1917), who is recognized as the 'sire of French scientific sociology'. The contribution of Durkheim in the development of the discipline of sociology is unparalleled. He has made considerable contribution to the field of sociology in general and has analysed key sociological concepts like Anomie. His major works include: *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *Suicide* (1897), *L'Année Sociologique* (1898) and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912). Durkheim refined the ideas of positivism put forward by Auguste Comte and regarded sociology as the science of institutions. Largely known

for giving key insights into issues such as social stratification, deviance, religion and 'collective consciousness', Durkheim dominated French intellectual life. Influenced by works of Charles Bernard Renouvier and Émile Boutroux, Durkheim sought to analyse the impact of laws, religion and education on society. He argued that scientific laws could be deduced from empirical observations and the importance of sociology would be seen through the ability to discover and understand 'social facts'.



LET US KNOW

Social movement : A persistent and organized effort involving the mobilization of large number of people to work together to either bring about what they believe to be the beneficial social change or resist or reverse what they believe to be the harmful social change.

4.3 THEORY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Social movements as a form of collective action to bring a change in a society has been debated from various angles. Mainstream writers of collective action, social movements and social disintegration are invariably drawn towards ideas put forward by Durkheim who viewed "social movements as the collective expression of aggregate psychological dysfunction and anomie, representing a society's failure to integrate diverse social constituencies." Invariably, collective action and collective conscience are some of the key ingredients of a social movement.

Understanding Social Change: The issue of social change is associated with the ideas of Emile Durkheim, who argued that collective action and social consciousness are closely related. According to Durkheim, 'society is not just composed of individuals alone, rather it 'has a structure and existence of its own, apart from the individuals in it.' People tend to act together to achieve some common purposes and in turn it reinforces social sentiments. Shared symbols, social bonds and representations, create conditions wherein social consciousness based on moral foundations tends to become more durable. Durkheim argued that a society is composed of

more than just individuals and it encompasses 'social facts' which are beyond personal concerns. Society by and large regulates human behaviour which is patterned largely because of 'structures' and social facts such as religion, value system, cultural norms affect individual behaviour in a variety of ways. A society is essentially a complex organism which extends beyond the individual. But compared to traditional societies, modern societies are more liberal and social controls over the individual are rather loose.

Mechanical and Organic Society: Durkheim, in *The Division of Labour in Society* argued that contemporary society represents the transition from mechanical solidarity (relations based on closed family ties and religion) to organic solidarity (relations based on division of labour). This transition is because of 'dynamic density', *i.e.* it is a product of increase in the number of individuals and growing interaction among them. The Modern society essentially consists of relations which are impersonal and individuals being self–sufficient is not possible. However, the issue of solidarity amongst different segments of the society seldom exists as each sector pursues its own interests and goals. Furthermore, a society is fragmented into several groups and individuals, who have their own narrow interests. For Durkheim, conflicts between the workers and the manufacturers are inevitable because of unequal social and economic relations, which hamper any kind of cooperation between the different segments of the society. Therefore, in modern societies, there is less stress on 'moral consensus' and more on 'functional interdependence'.

According to Durkheim, the traditional society which is based on mechanical solidarity is characterized by 'repressive law', wherein common morality and shared values dominate relations among the people. In contrast, a modern society, where organic solidarity is predominant, is characterized by 'restitutive law', where people are less attached emotionally to societal norms and its breaches and the compliance to law is stressed upon and its regulation is done by specialized agencies.

Collective conscience and collective responsibility: Durkheim argues that there is a symbiotic relationship between collective action and consciousness. Symbols and social bond strengthen collective consciousness. Social solidarity amongst different segments of the society

are a result of 'societal networks'. Durkheim focuses on the idea of collective conscience, which represented a 'totality' of people, beliefs and sentiments, which is less significant in as organic societies. The 'cult of the individual' is a distinctive characteristic of the modern society where organic solidarity is more prevalent. Anthony Giddens highlights that the issue of collective conscience in the mechanical and organic societies can be distinguished on four different dimensions- volume, intensity, rigidity and content. But with the increased division of labour, occupational subgroups may have some collective consciousness which is incompatible with that of their traditional societies. It may lead to subgroups pursuing their own narrow parochial interests. The idea of collective consciousness however continued to remain vague because of its all-encompassing character. Collective consciousness which encompasses 'shared humanity' continued to remain vague. Hence, Durkheim soon moved towards the idea of 'collective representation', represented through the institution of family, state, religious and educational institutions, which helped him conceptualise the non-material social facts and was also not reducible to the level of individual consciousness.

As Wray, Colen & Pescosolido note, for Durkheim, "individuals require moral guidance and external restraint because without them their desires and expectations will exceed their grasp, with the resulting failures and frustrations leading to continuous states of despair." Along with the organic society came its own share of problems, individualism and growing sense of disparity. As a consequence of this, anomie is the resultant condition. Durkheim argues that due to the rise of individualism and modernization of society, social integration has become a greater challenge. Anomie essentially is a "condition in which society provides little moral guidance to individuals." Anomie signifies the weakening of social institutions, and at times, it may lead to dysfunctional outcomes, which include suicides.

According to Durkheim, 'pathologies' such as anomie could be cured. Though Durkheim was not a revolutionary or a radical Marxist, he did outline a scheme of things wherein 'occupational associations' could play an important role. Unlike Marxism, which saw a clash of interests between the workers and the owners, Durkheim believed that such contradictions arise because the people involved lacked 'common morality' which could be traced in the

'lack of an integrative structure'. As such, occupational associations could help serve 'agents of the same industry united and organised into a single group'. By doing so, 'common interests' of people from different categories could be well recognized and the common need for an 'integrative moral system' could be realized. The problems of modern society could be overcome by reinforcing 'collective morality'. Effectively, this integrative moral system could help fight pathological trait, help prevent decline of 'collective morality' and could prevent atomization in modern society.

Durkheim's contribution to understanding theory of 'collective movements' is acknowledged by theoreticians like Charles Tilly in his book *Useless Durkheim* (1981). While Durkheim argued about social change, division of labour and its implications on the individual in a modern society, it was primarily related to events taking place in the nineteenth century Europe. 'Multiplicity of elements' shape social action and the actors internalise the same and the 'breakdown' cannot be generalized.

The theories of social movements essentially aim to study the factors that contribute to the transformation of society or look into conditions that maintain the status quo. Durkheim's views on the conflicts among social classes essentially reflect the idea that 'solidarity incentives' are incompatible with 'individual convenience' especially in a modern society. But occupational groups can play an important role in reminding all the participants of 'general interests and reciprocal duties'. These groups may further help in organizing public opinion as well as act as a bridge between individuals and the state. The success of any social movement depends upon the relations based on equal power and partnership. Success is further reflected in the 'achievement of cultural, social and political change'. But Durkheim's idea of occupational groups playing an important role is self-contradictory because the workers and owners will seldom have common goals and common needs. However, Durkheim's contribution to the ideas on social movements stem from his contribution towards understanding the concepts such as social and collective consciousness. Furthermore, the need to have 'occupational groups' by Durkheim suggest that the reconciliation of goals between different groups may be possible in the long run and can help overcome pathological challenges faced by the members of the society.

LET US KNOW



M. Diani, points out that there are four aspects of any social movements -

a) networks of informal interaction;

b) shared beliefs and solidarity;

c) collective action on conflictual issues;

d) action which displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life.

Source: M. Diani 'The Concept of Social Movement', The Sociological Review, 40(1), 1992, p.7

Type of Movement	Goals	Examples
Innovative (Liberal)	Introduce new cultural elements, patterns of interaction, policy, or institutions	Legalize marijuana movement
Conservative	Maintain things the way they are	Keep marijuana illegal movement
Reactionary	Bring back old cultural elements, patterns of behavior, policy, or institutions	Movement opposing same-sex marriage
Reform	Change cultural elements, patterns of behavior, and/or policy, but do not replace institutions	U.S. civil rights movement
Revolutionary	Bring about great structural change by replacing one or more major social institutions	American Revolution, French Revolution
Identity	Create positive cultural and personal identities for members of groups that have been the target of prejudice and discrimination	Gay rights movement
New social	Achieve moral, quality-of-life, self-actualization, and other noneconomic goals	Anti–Vietnam War movement, environmental movement
Alternative	Change one specific type of behavior	Temperance movement, abstinence movement
Redemptive	Total moral change of individuals affecting multiple behaviors	Religious fundamentalist movement
Transnational	Achieve aims in more than one country	Human rights movement

Source: James DEFronzo and Jungyun Gill, Social Problems and Social Movements, Women and Littlefield, 2019, p.30, Available at https://rowman.com/webdocs/SP_CH2.pdf



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What is a Social Movement?

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Q.2: What are social facts?

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Q.3: What is mechanical solidarity?

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Q.4: What is organic solidarity?

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Q.5: What is collective conscience?

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4.4 ANOMIE THEORY AND DURKHEIM'S CONCEPT OF ANOMIE

Durkheim was deeply concerned about the decline of 'common morality' in a modern society. Introduced into Sociology by Durkheim, anomie "refers to the lack or ineffectiveness of normative regulation in society." Initially used to describe the changes in a society during industrial revolution, it signaled the 'disruption of values and norms' of a traditional society. Anomie has been 'conceived as the absence or defectiveness of the social regulation needed to bring about the cooperation between specialized functions.' For Durkheim, the French word 'anomie' meant 'without norms' which was used to describe the state of societies rather than of individuals that underwent when they shifted from agrarian village economies to an industrial modern society. However, the effects of anomie were well felt by the individuals because of such transition in their economic lifestyle. Individuals are confronted with anomie when 'moral constraints' decline; and the issues of

'acceptable behaviour' tend to be challenged more frequently by the individuals concerned. Largely identified with a social-psychological condition, over a period of time, the term was broadly used and there is considerable discrepancy in its usage.

The concept of anomie is fluidic in nature and it has been interpreted by Durkheim differently at different times. In his book, *The Division of labor in Society*, he defined it as a 'condition of inadequate procedural rules to regulate complementary relationship among the specialized and interdependent parts of a complex social system.' In another work, *Suicide*, Durkheim described anomie as a condition of inadequate moral norms to guide and control the actions of people and groups in the interests of the total social system. DiChrintina in the article '*Durkheim's theory of anomie and crime: A clarification and elaboration'* (2016) highlights the different ways Durkheim reinterpreted the concept of anomie. In *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim discussed anomie in terms of an abnormal form of the division of labour. In *Suicide*, Durkheim presented another description of anomie. There he proposed a distinction between egoistic, anomic, altruistic, and fatalistic suicide—the first two being more common in modern societies and the last two more common in pre-modern societies. At times, in Durkheim's work, the term anomie appears to represent excessive imprecision and weakening of the ''collective or common consciousness.'' Again, Durkheim stated, ''... anomie is the contradiction of all morality.''

The cause of anomie: For Durkheim, a 'natural wellspring' within human beings brings forth limitless desires and heightened expectations. Durkheim believed that no person can be happy unless their needs are proportional to their means at their disposal. Mechanical solidarity that is prevalent in traditional societies helps constrain such heightened expectations. As a result, frustrations and deviant behaviour is curbed. But such restraints are loosened in an organic society.

Ruohui Zhao & Liqun Cao have reflected in their article in *Social Forces* (2010) that 'Durkheim is specifically concerned with the social transition from a rural society with mechanical solidarity to an urban society

with organic solidarity and the spread of anomie during this unique period'. According to Durkheim, agrarian village economies are governed by certain norms, values and expectations. This pattern of behaviour is identified as 'mechanical solidarity'. However, with the emergence of industrialism and spread of capitalism, mechanical solidarity begins to decline and is replaced by 'organic solidarity'. The presence of organic solidarity is largely facilitated by the presence of the division of labour. But the transition from mechanic to organic solidarity takes place over a period of time. This transient phase is characterized by a 'state of relative normative disorientation' which is described as 'anomic'. In towns and larger cities, social control and moral constraints and restraints on individuals seem to be less prevalent. As a result, in an environment where there is 'inadequate normative direction', people are rather confused about what constitutes 'acceptable behaviour'. Durkheim sees anomie as a 'state of social disintegration' and argued that the rise of anomie is closely linked to the incompatibility between individual standards and greater social standards, which then essentially leads to moral degeneration.

Europe was undergoing economic transformation and Durkheim was quick to analyse the consequences of this transformation on the society and the individuals. He was of the view that with the growth of industrialism, the level of interaction between the different actors decreases. As a result, owing to mechanization and specialization, the sense of collective solidarity amongst workers declines. He believed that during times of social transition, "collective consciousness" is largely weakened and there is slackening of previously held norms and moral convictions as social control inevitably become loose.

However, the central 'pathology' in modern societies is the 'anomic division of labour'. Durkheim's idea of anomie is not only found in his book *The Division of Labour*, but it has also been a major part of *Suicide* (1897). Di Christina concludes, "Although Durkheim's conception of anomie is somewhat elusive, it is safe to conclude that he viewed it as a phenomenon that involves different kinds of deregulation, affects different spheres of

collective life, often accompanies rapid social change, and has a variety of unfavorable effects on society." Durkheim believed that because it is a pathological problem, curing the same is also possible. Anomie is a pathological condition associated with an organic society wherein there is loosening of common morality and individuals become more isolated, which may lead to suicides. Essentially, anomic suicide is linked with the decline of collective morality and insufficient external regulation of individual behaviour.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6: Name any two books written by Durkheim.

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Q.7: According to Durkheim, what are the different forms of suicide?

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Q.8: What does 'anomie' mean?

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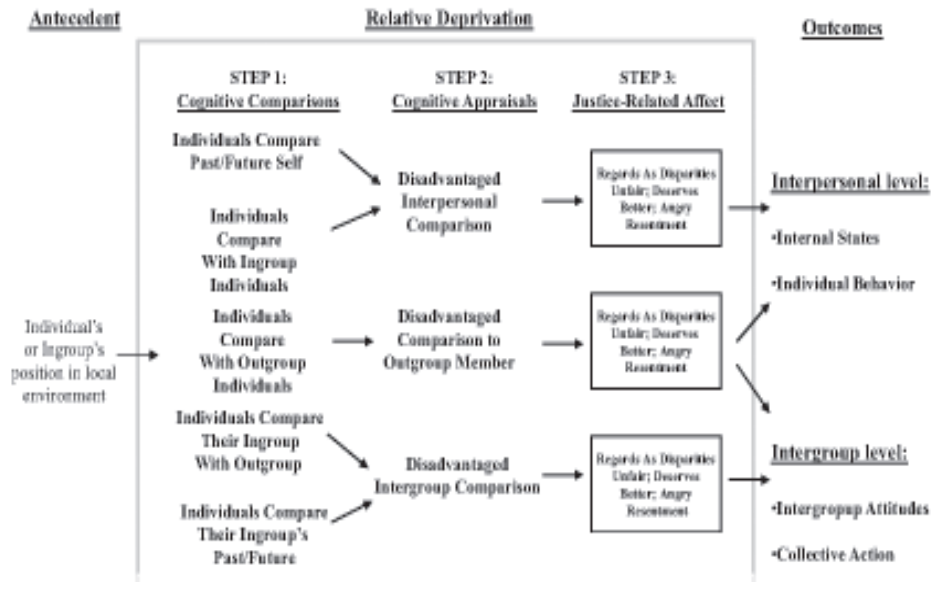
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4.5 CONCEPT OF RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

The concept of relative deprivation "links the individual with the interpersonal and intergroup levels of analysis."[1] The concept of relative deprivation in the study of social movements can be traced back to ideas put forward by Marx, de Tocqueville and Durkheim. The idea of 'relative deprivation' has usually been studied in the context of a reference group. Since then, there have been studies done by eminent sociologists and writers like R. Merton, T. Gurr and Denton Morrison, wherein it was identified with the 'perception that individual achievements have failed to keep pace with individual expectations'. Denton Morrison points out that relative deprivation is 'that feelings of deprivation, of discontent over one's situation, and it depends on what one wants to have; that is, deprivation occurs in relation to desired points of reference, often 'reference groups,' rather than in relation to how little one has.'[2] He further points out that 'social movements

are thought to emerge and flourish when groups of persons experience relative deprivation.'[3] Relative deprivation theory also highlights the 'potential gulf separating aspiration and the means to fulfil them, especially in times of accelerated change.'[4]Traggot notes, 'Durkheim observed that the conditions of low integration produced a variety of symptomatic consequences ranging from individual disorientation to social conflict.'[5] Gurley and Tierney further note, 'Essentially it is the perceived discrepancy between expectation and reality.'[6]

Koktsidis points out that 'deprivation theorists prefer to speak of a "relative", "comparative" and "proportionate" type of deprivation leading to frustration and violence, rather than "absolute" and "generalized" levels of poverty. The term relative points to the essential idea that another person or group provides the base of comparison of one's needs and gratification.'[7] Through the notion of reference groups, James Geschwender asserts that 'status inconsistency' as well as 'rising expectations' are very much associated with the concept of relative deprivation.[8] An individual compares his/her position to others in the group; furthermore, one group may also compare its status with other groups as well.



Source: Smith, H. J., Pettigrew, T. F., Pippin, G. M., & Bialosiewicz, S. (2011). Relative Deprivation. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16(3), 203-232. doi:10.1177/1088868311430825

Durkheim extensively studied the societal problems that were associated with Industrial Europe. As such, his views on social disintegration, anomie and forced division of labour have been path breaking. Durkheim sought to analyse the challenges an individual and communities face during economic transition, especially when moving from a mechanical to an organic society. For Durkheim, 'social groups have structural properties where norms, values and on-going social relationships place constraints on the individual'. But invariably, with the emergence of an organic society, the growing forced division of labour creates conditions of anomie where the individuals face difficulties in adjusting to the new social environment. Mueller elucidates, 'Anomie—the lack of regulation or deregulation of social life-is the result of rapid and radical social change. But anomie does not mean a fundamental crisis of the system, but rather a crisis of adaptation.'[9]

In the Industrial societies, there is a marked contradiction between individual need and social goals. In such societies, self-interest is dominant and there is 'increased division of labour both within and between various enterprises which lead to greater vulnerability of the productive system'. Capitalist economies create conditions wherein there is increased bargaining between the different workers and this results in adhoc and piecemeal agreements in settlement of interests between groups. Issues of social integration, lack of cohesion and mismatch between personal ambitions and means create greater problems for the individuals and the society in the long run. Ken Thomson in his book *Emile Durkheim* (2002) points out that rapid economic changes lead to conflict of interests and it also leads to growing discrepancies between a group's expectation and their achievement. In such a condition of relative deprivation, norms governing the means of goal attainment break down and it results in anomie and increased disorder.[10] According to Durkheim, if excessive individualism is to be curbed, forced division of the labour has to be abolished. Durkheim proposes radical institutional reforms which will help overcome the distresses that come along when moving from a mechanical to an organic society. It includes abolition of inheritance of private property, introduction

of meritocratic principles of occupational recruitment and regulation of employment contracts to prevent unfair exploitation.

Durkheim does suggest the importance of occupational groups which has 'moral power' in 'containing individual egos, of maintaining spirited sentiment of common solidarity in the consciousness of all the workers, of preventing the law of the strongest from being brutally applied to industrial and commercial relations.'



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.9: What is a 'reference group'?

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

- Durkheim has made key contributions to the field of sociology and has analysed the important sociological concepts like anomie and suicide.
- According to Durkheim, 'the importance of sociology lies in its ability to discover and understand 'social facts'.'
- In *The Division of Labour in Society*, 'Durkheim, argued that the contemporary society represents the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity.'
- According to Durkheim, 'pathologies' such as anomie could be cured and 'occupational associations' could play an important role in this process.
- Relative deprivation and reference groups are closely linked. Durkheim argued that 'rapid economic changes lead to the conflict of interests and it also leads to the growing discrepancies between a group's expectation and their achievement.'



4.7 FURTHER READING

1) Godlove, I. and Terry, F. (2005). *Emile Durkheim, 1858–1917.* New York: Oxford University Press.

2) Ritzer, G. (2011). *Sociological theory.* New York: McGraw-Hill. (8th Ed.).

3) Schmaus, W. (2004). *Rethinking Durkheim and his tradition*. Cambridge University Press.

4) Smelser, N.J. and Warner, R.S. (1976). *Sociological theory: Historical and formal*. General Learning Press.



4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Social movements are a form of collective action which seek to bring about a change in the society. There are various types of social movements- some of them deal with social reforms. There are also new social movements and transnational movements.

Ans to Q No 2: According to Durkheim, a society is composed of more than just individuals and it encompasses 'social facts' which are beyond personal concerns. Human behaviour is patterned largely because of 'structures' and social facts such as religion, value system, cultural norms affect individual behaviour in a variety of ways.

Ans to Q No 3: According to Durkheim, traditional societies are characterized by mechanical solidarity where relations are based on closed family ties and religion.

Ans to Q No 4: Durkheim in The Division of Labour in Society argued that contemporary society is characterized by organic solidarity where relations are based on the division of labour.

Ans to Q No 5: Durkheim focuses on the idea of collective conscience, which represented a 'totality' of people's beliefs and sentiments, which is less significant in the organic societies.

Ans to Q No 6: a. The Division of Labour in Society (1893)

b. The Rules of Sociological Method (1895)

Ans to Q No 7: The different forms of suicide are- egoistic, anomic, altruistic, and fatalistic suicide.

Ans to Q No 8: Introduced to sociology by Durkheim, 'anomie refers to the lack or ineffectiveness of normative regulation in society'. Initially, used to describe the changes in a society during industrial revolution, it signaled the 'disruption of values and norms' of a traditional society.

Ans to Q No 9: Individual or group behaviour is often compared to other individual and groups. These are known as reference groups.



4.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : What is social change?

Q. 2 : What is the cause of anomie?

Q. 3 : According to Durkheim, what is the cure for pathologies like anomie?

B) Short Questions (Answer within 150 words)

Q. 1 : Write a note on the idea of Anomie.

Q. 2 : Mention the major works of Durkheim.

Q. 3 : Explain the relationship between collective conscience and collective responsibility.

C) Long Questions (Answer within 300-500 words)

Q. 1 : Discuss the concept of social facts.

Q. 2 : Discuss the concept of relative deprivation.

Q. 3 : Analyse the contribution of Durkheim to sociological theory.

End notes:

[1] H. J. Smith, T. F. Pettigrew, G. M.Pippin, & S. Bialosiewicz (2011). Relative Deprivation. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 16(3), 2011, p. 203.

[2] Denton E. Morrison, 'Some Notes Toward Theory on Relative Deprivation, Social Movements, and Social Change', American Behavioral Scientist, Vol.14,5, p.695.

[3] ibid., p.695.

[4] Mark Trauggot, 'Durkheim and social movements', European Journal of Sociology , Volume 25 Issue 02 November 1984, p.319.

[5] ibid., p.321.

[6] Joan Neff Gurney and Kathleen J. Tierney , 'Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research', The Sociological Quarterly, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Winter, 1982), p.34.

[7] P. I. Koktsidis, 'From deprivation to violence? Examining the violent escalation of conflict in the Republic of Macedonia', Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict, 7(1), 2014, p.3.

[8] James Geschwender, 'Social structure and the Negro revolt: an examination of some hypotheses',Social Forces ,43 (December) , 1964,pp. 248-56.

[9] Hans-Peter Müller, 'Social Differentiation and Organic Solidarity: The "Division of Labor" Revisited', Sociological Forum, Vol. 9, No. 1, Special Issue: The 100th Anniversary of Sociology's First Classic: Durkheim's "Division of Labor in Society." (Mar., 1994), p.80.

[10] Ken Thomson, Emile Durkheim, Routledge, New York, 2002, p.85.

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UNIT 5: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Meaning and Definition of Social Change

5.4 Factors Responsible for Social Change

5.5 Different Theories of Social Change

5.6 Impact of Social Change; Reform, Revival, Revolution and Counter Movements

5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5.8 Further Reading

5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.10 Possible Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- know about the meaning and definition of social change
- explain the factors responsible for social change
- discuss the different theories of social change
- describe the impact of social change

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Change is the law of nature. In this world everything changes with time, so the society. The old order of a society has always been in constant change and gets replaced by a new order. There are many scholars who had tried to understand the idea of social change at different periods of history. There are many definitions of social change, but going through all these, we can come to a conclusion that social change more or less is concerned with two levels of changes. The first is that it is associated with the changes in the social structure of the society and the second, it is

related to the changes in the values and social norms which is mainly responsible for social cohesion, or in other words, binding people together in society in order to maintain a proper social order. There are many factors as well as theories of social change because of which it is not an isolated event. With social change there also emerges different consequences or impact. This chapter therefore deals with the various important concepts related to social change.

5.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Meaning:

One of the most permanent laws of nature is change. Everything changes with time because nothing is permanent. All matters in the universe go through a phase of transition, transformation or substitution, including the society. The society is under a constant change since its inception. The old order of a society has always been replaced by a new order. No one on earth can claim that the society remains as it is, through the history of mankind. If we keenly observe, we find a large amount of variation in society of traditional period and the modern or contemporary period. There were different periods in which man lived in different types of societies and which significantly evolved from one pattern to another. The growth from the Paleolithic era up to the Neolithic, then to the Stone Age and subsequently to the copper age is the finest evidence of social change that took place. Therefore, the changes in a society take place in different variations which include the social structure, social institutions, social practices, social behaviours, social relations, traditions and habits etc. that can be termed as social change. It is the alteration or change in the earlier or previous style of continuation. Social change is purely a universal phenomenon.

Definitions:

There are many scholars and thinkers who have put forward their own perspectives on the idea of social change. As such, it is important for us to go through some of the popular definitions in order to have a better insight to the concept of social change.

Ginsberg was of the view that social change has always associated itself with any change in the social structure.

Kingsley Doris elucidated that social change are those alternations which mainly take place in the social organization which involves the social structure and functions of the society.

Merril and Elbridge claimed that social change is the process in which a large number of people engaged themselves in activities which are different or vary from their past generations or fore-fathers.

According to *Gillin and Gillin,* the variations in the accepted way of life of the people in the society is social change. The social change may take place due to changes in the geographical locations or the cultural elements and also due to the composition of the population. Moreover, social change also involves an ideological perspective of change.

Jones explained that the term social change signifies the variations or modification of any feature of social activities and process, social interaction, social patterns or social organization.

M. D. Jenson described that social change is the process of alteration in people's ways of doing something or thinking.

According to *MacIver and Page,* the idea of social change involves the different level of changes that takes place in man's life. Primarily, it is the total change in the condition of life of the man. It also includes the changes in the beliefs and attitude of the people, and lastly it involves all the other changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and physical nature of things.

Morris Ginsberg holds the view that the process of social change is the modification of the social structure. For example, he put forward the process of change which brings changes in the size of the society, the social composition or the sense of balance of its elements and also the nature of the social organization.

P. Fairchild has defined social change as something which is entirely associated with the aspects of social process and its modifications and variations of pattern or form.

B. Kuppuswamy elucidated that social change is the process in which there is visible changes or alternation takes place in the functioning and structure of a particular social system.

H.M. Johnson claimed that social change is either the change in the structure or quasi- structural features of a social system.

Anderson and Parker has stated that social change is the modifications in the social structure or functioning of societal functions and processes.

H.T. Mazumdar gave the view that social change is a new fashion or mode related to the social life of the people. It either modifies or replaces the social practices of the people with regard to the society and its operations.

By analyzing the above definitions, we can come to a conclusion that social change more or less is concerned with two levels of changes. The first is that it is associated with the changes in the social structure of the society, and the second, it is related with the changes in the values and social norms which are mainly responsible for social cohesion. But, it is important at this stage to understand that the two levels of changes must not be treated as separate. In fact, both are related, a change in one can lead to a change in the other.



LET US KNOW

One of the basic characteristic of social change is that it is primarily social. It is entirely related to the society and is different structures and institutions. Social relationship is the main area of social change. Social change is a universal phenomenon. Not a single society in this world is static. It is a continuous process. There is no value judgment in social change. It is neutral. Moreover, there are many factors which contribute to social change.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: One of the most permanent laws of nature is the change. (True/False)

.....

Q. 2: Social change is purely a ..... phenomenon. (Fill in the blank).

Q. 3: What is social change?

.....

Q. 4: What was *Gillin* and *Gillin's* view on social change?

.....

.....

5.4 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Social change basically involve two changes- one is the macro changes and other is the micro changes. The changes which occur at institutional and structural levels of society are the macro changes whereas the changes which take place daily are the micro changes. Whatever may be the type of social change, we must remember that there are many factors which are responsible for social change. Some of these include, the demographic, natural, technological, cultural and economic changes.

- **Demographic Factors**

One of the most important factors of social change is the demographic factor. The change in the population of a society drastically leads to different social changes. The change in the population composition of a society is directly proportional to the social structural change of the particular society. It is also natural that the population and its composition of a society are always changing and therefore social change is obvious. Generally, the population of an area changes with the migration of people, war, natural calamities, invasion etc. Now, let us consider the issues responsible for social change.

A reciprocal relationship has always existed between the population and social structure. The social structure influences population changes and the changes in population too influence the social structure. For instance, if we consider the population ratio or sex ratio, a proper ratio for proper balance between male and female in the society is 1:1. A change in this ratio definitely leads to changes in the society. The presence of more numbers of female leads to a different set of law courts, marriage system and family organizations. Moreover, the presence of more number of women degenerate the status and position in the community. If the population of adults is more than others there will be need for more regulations. If the older population exceeds the general people, then the society will be less prone for any type of change or new progress. The decline or rise in both the birth rate and the death rate also brings different social transformation. Lastly, the migration of people also leads to social change both in case of internal and external migration.

There is high economic growth in the developed countries which leads to high social standards of living. On the other hand, the developing countries with high population have to face many difficulties which include increase in birth rate, lower standards of health, problem of unemployment, different sorts of violence and crime. This happens because of low economic growth in such societies. Therefore, it can be summed up that the effects of demography on the society are many fold which includes changes in the society, changes in the economy, changes in the education system and also in the values, politics and culture of a society.

- **Natural Factors**

Man is always deeply connected with nature. Social change is responsible also for natural factors which include different national calamities like floods, earthquakes, drought, and epidemics. All these are directly disruptive for the social system. It brings an overall change in the social conditions of the people affected by the natural problems. It makes large scale damages not only on the victims but on the overall social atmosphere. For instance, after a large scale natural devastation,

the redevelopment works might deprive the weak or less powerful to avail the services and opportunity for development. As such, in such a society where the natural factors create two classes encompassing the privileged and unprivileged, there would always be different social culture, norms, values etc., contributing towards a social change for future progress and development.

Human beings and the physical environment depend on each other. The physical environment comprises the forests, deserts, mountains, and everything which nature has provided them. People exploit the physical environment or natural resources for their own interest. This leads to both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact may comprise all the possibilities for development and progress of mankind that human beings could acquire with the use and exploitation of the physical environment. On the other hand, the negative actions encompass deforestation, pollution and misuse of the natural resources. Therefore, the change that occurs in the physical environment brings about a change in the society and its people as a whole and the changes of the society would put pressure on the physical or natural environment.

- **Technological Factors**

The modern age is the age of technology. Technological development has drastically brought a change in the lives of all the people around the globe. Today is the age of globalization and the advancement in technology has brought dramatic social changes. In this regard, famous thinkers like *Ogburn* and *Nimkoff* have rightly observed that though we consider capitalism in this modern period to be the driving force behind all the social changes that are visible, it is not just capitalism. The technological field and its associated developments are all together responsible for social changes, and capitalism is just the by-product of the technological innovations. The economic structure and relations have undergone an all-round transformation due to the effects of technology. The old values, norms, culture, traditions etc. have been replaced and a new set of social norms and values have taken up their place which would lead to the social change.



Cultural Lag: The term cultural lag refers to the notion that culture takes time to catch up with technological innovations, and that social problems and conflicts are caused by this lag.

The technological changes have provided better communication facilities among the people, more job opportunities and advancement in social security as well as national defense. The advancement in the field of technology which has been induced in the modern society has led to the changes in our family system. Nuclear families have now come up. Moreover, there is a transformation in women's role in the modern societies. There are also changes that have been observed in human relationships. There is now lack of religious interference in social life of the people. All these factors have more or less brought a drastic change in the social institutions of people's social life. But, there is also a negative dimension of the technological development. In many societies, this has led to a ***cultural lag.***

- **Cultural Factors**

The change in the technology has also brought a change in the culture of the society. As such different cultural factors are responsible for social change which has been more profound after its contact with the technological advancements. It is to be noted here that culture is always responsive to the changing environment. For instance, the culture of the people in the medieval age is different from the culture of the modern age. The people of the modern period are sounder with ideas like equality, justice, and liberty whereas the ancient people were not so much aware about such concepts. These ideas and customs lead to social changes. Therefore, the social systems can be regarded as directly or indirectly a creation of the culture of the society. *Dawson* and *Gettys* have rightly observed that culture gives a definite speed and definite direction to social change.

There are two main aspects of the cultural change in the society. One is by discovery and invention and the other by diffusion and borrowing which lead to the change of culture. Discovery and invention take place within a society, it is from inside the system. Different knowledge systems lead to change in the habits of thinking which later shape values and norms

for the society. This in turn becomes an important element of social change. The second one that is by diffusion and borrowing elucidates the association of one culture with another from outside the society. Different cultural patterns have undergone transformation in this process. Cultural trait has been adopted by the people of a society from another culture with whom they came in contact. For example, we often say nowadays many cultures have adopted the western culture. All these would finally lead to social change.

- **Economic Factors**

The economic factors are also important factors for social change. In fact, the existence of the society and its day to day practices solely depend upon the economic conditions of the people as well as the system. The modern societies are the creation of the evolution process that started right from the pre-historic times. As such, the economic system of the societies have also gone through different phases of transitions. People who in the past just survived on hunting and food gathering are now a part of the industrialized world. This is the greatest evidence of social change where economic influences played major role. In other words, economic changes are directly proportional to the social changes. Different components of the society which include the educational, technological, scientific prosperity and many others are affected by the development in economy and thus leading to an overall social change. *Karl Marx* was the main thinker who emphasized the connection of the economy and society. According to him, the means of production and distribution determines the social structure of a nation. Whenever there are changes in the means of production, the society automatically changes.

ACTIVITY 5.1



Try to list out the major social changes that took place in the Pre-independent and Post-independent India.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: One of the most important factors of social change is the demographic factor. (True/False)

.....

Q.6: The social systems can be regarded directly or indirectly as a creation of the _____of the society. (Fill in the blank)

Q.7: What is Cultural Lag?

.....

.....

Q.8: Name the different factors of social change?

.....

.....

5.5 DIFFERENT THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The idea of social change has been interpreted in many forms and as such it has led to the emergence of different theories. Now, let us look at some of the theories of social change which include Determination Theory, Evolutionary Theory, Cyclical Theory, Economic Theory and Religion Theory.

- **Determination Theory**

According to the theory of determination, every society is changing with the passage of time and it actually deteriorates each passing day. It changes its course from happiness towards dissatisfaction and from peace to chaos. This makes the demand for social change even sounder and determined. The people in the society wanted to live in an atmosphere which could provide them with the opportunities for self-development and appraisal. As such, people wanted to bring about a change in the old customs and practices and move towards a newer one. In other words, the basic human nature makes way for social changes.

- **Evolutionary Theory**

Social change can be categorically placed under two sorts of evolutions. One is the uni-dimensional evolution and other is the multi-

dimensional evolution. Uni-dimensional evolution held the view that societies generally process in a single line that is from the simple form to the more complex one or from the primitive towards more differentiated one. Whereas the multi-dimensional evolution took the structural, institutional, and cultural development of a society into account. They argue that these developments of a society actually pass through many evolutionary phases.

The idea of evolution basically came into the domain of social sciences from the biological evolution concept put forwarded by *Charles Darwin*. He elucidated that all species of organisms have aroused and developed through a natural process which teaches the individuals to increase their ability to reproduce, survive, and compete. *Auguste Comte* was another thinker who explains that society passed through three different stages which include the theological, metaphysical and positive stage. The first type of stage stressed on supernatural beliefs. The second stage was the stage of metaphysics. The third stage was empirical and paved way for cyclic studies. Then it was *Herbert Spencer* who described the concept of social change by comparing societies with organism. The prior society was a militant society that focused mainly on survival, and then came the industrialism in which differentiation was evolved, and finally, the societies moved towards integration.

- **Irregular Social Changes Theory**

Similar to the Darwin's idea of evolution based on biology, it was *William Ogbur* who introduced this particular theory of social change. The irregular theory of social change asserts that the culture is divided into two main kinds which include the material culture or non-material or adaptive culture. In case of material culture, the social changes take place at a very fast speed. While on the other hand, social changes in terms of non-material domain responds slowly to any kind of change. The gap between material and non-material culture is basically the cultural lag which is the source of all kinds of disharmony and maladjustment in the society. Forest, for instance, may be destroyed because conservation policies lag behind modern agriculture, new industrial needs may not be

met by antiquated educational systems, and traffic regulation may be ineffectual as far as the latest means of transportation are concerned. However, this theory has its own weakness as nothing is presented clearly portraying changes or causes of changes in the material culture itself. However, the thinker is credited for highlighting the cultural lag and showing how technology could leave an impact on the society, thus giving impetus to different social changes.

- **Theory of Systematic Efforts**

Ludwig Stein and *Hobhouse* are the ones who belong to this school of thought. According to them, social change does not come of its own. They reject the idea of materialistic and non-materialistic factors of social change. On the other hand, they believed that there are certain systematic efforts which are actually responsible for social change. These include the spreads of knowledge and literacy which in the long run is responsible for bringing up changes in the society. According to them, our conscious efforts in a planned way are more effective for bringing a social change than unplanned and unsystematic efforts because in the latter processes, social process is very slow.

- **Cyclical Theory**

The main assumption of the cyclical theory is that a society is similar to a living being which possess a life cycle. *Oswald Spengler* and *Arnold J. Toynbee* are the ones who are credited for the development of the theory. They elucidated that the societies and civilizations actually change according to a cycles which comprise the rise, decline and finally fall just similar to a human being who is born, mature, grow old, and finally die. According to German thinker *Spengler*, the life cycle of every society is also predetermined life. The society after passing through the different stages do not stop at the end but it returns back to the original position and the style starts again. For example, *J.B. Bury's* analysis on social change and society came to the conclusion that great civilizations like Roman, Greek and Egyptian civilizations went through the similar fashion and finally met their end of the cycle.

It was also *August Comte* who portrayed change in a cyclic order. He said that the society has undergone three main stage. These are theological, metaphysical and positive. In the theological stage, society believes in the existence of supernatural powers and accepted the idea that these powers are essential and important which control our social behaviour. The next stage is the metaphysical stage in which *Comte's* ideas on supernatural powers has changed and from God, he came to abstraction and tried to explain social behavior through abstraction. In the third stage which is called positive stage, everything is being empirically studied and all this is going on in a cyclical order.

- **Economic Theory**

The economic theory of social change assumes that the economic conditions of the society are mainly responsible for social changes that take place in the society. In order to explain the economic interpretation of social changes we must refer to the Marxian analysis of society in terms of economy. It divides the society into two structures. One is the infra-structure and other the super-structure. The first one consists of the forces and relations of productions. The second one consists of those elements of the social system, which include the legal, ideological, political and religious institutors, which is responsible in maintaining the infra-structure and which are changed by it.

The main founder and advocate of this theory, *Karl Marx* argues that the state of productive forces determines the socio-economic structure of society. This had led to the creation of two classes in the society, have and have-not, and in each social transition there has been a class struggle between the two contradicting classes. According to *Marx*, the driving force of social change is nothing but the class struggle. He therefore remarked that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles'. Conflict in societies is inevitable. There is no single society where there is no conflict. As such, these are the factors altogether which lead to the changes of the societies.

- **Religious Theory**

Religious theory was supported by many who actually did not agree with the arguments of *Karl Marx* on economic determinism. According to the opponents, economic factor is not the sole factor for social change. It is religion rather than economics which is mainly responsible for social change. It was mainly *Max Weber* who greatly contributed to the idea that religion is solely responsible for bringing about a change in society. He justified his arguments on grounds that the emergence of religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or Judaism has brought substantial social changes in the past as well as present and this is the sole reason why thinkers like *Weber* gave more importance to religion rather than to the economic aspects of life with regard to the social changes.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.9: The main founder and advocate of economic theory is Karl Marx (True/False)

.....

Q.10: According to the theory of determination, every society is changing with the passage of _____ (Fill in the blank)

Q.11: What are the different theories of social change?

.....

.....

5.6 IMPACT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The term social change itself reflects that it is the alteration of the existing order of the society. When there is a social change, it always leaves its traces in the society. There are different impacts that social change can bring along with them. Some of them include reform, revival, revolution and counter movements.

- **Reform**

The first impact of social change is that it seeks to reform the present structure or institutions or practices of the society in order to improve it.

However, we must understand that there is a difference between social change and social reform and one must not consider both on the same line. When we refer to social change, it signifies that it can be either positive or negative alteration of the society. For instance, there can be social change in different phases and each phase might experience a difference in terms of women's position in the society. It is not that the position would improve with social changes. It might get degraded at some point and might revive at the other. As such, social change has been always considered a value-neutral term.

On the other hand, social reform is a positive concept and is desirable in the society to make it more stable and orderly. For instance, if women's participation in politics or economy has significantly increased as compared to the preceding years, then it would be considered a positive aspect of social change which is nothing but a social reform. Social change therefore, brings along with them both negative and positive changes. The positive changes bring prosperity to the society and reform the entire society in such a way that it provides ample scope to the individuals to grow and make progress in various spheres of life. If we look into the history of mankind, we would find that different social changes have led to different social reforms or reform movements. One such popular reforms which the changing Indian society has observed has been *Mahatma Gandhi's* model of self-sufficient villages through the means of the spinning wheel.

- **Revival**

The prominent impact of social change is the revival. Revival generally refers to the religious reawakening or transformation that social change brings about. We all know that religion has always been an active torch bearer of social change. But the social change also affects religion in different ways. We can easily observe that many nations have been built up on the basis of religion and there are many who did not make religion their base in nation building. But, the changes in a society always lead to religious revival.

When a new religion in a colony is introduced, we must understand that it is not introduced into a vacuum. The society already has exciting beliefs, traditions and practices which are responsible for performing certain social responsibilities within the society. An all new set of values and attitudes come in place in the society when a new religion is received by a society. But, the existing religions are challenged on the basis of their stability in the society. There are five functions which a religion performs- social solidarity, social control, social change, psychological support, and provision of meaning. However, all these functions go through a phase of transition when a new and alternative religion comes into the society. The new religion would start to dictate many of the social functions and the existing religions would start to face complexities as their power and control in the society diminishes.

- **Revolution**

Social Change and social revolution have a close relationship with each other. There is always essential change in a society associated with a social revolution. It entirely changes the power dynamics in the society. Generally, revolutions in a society occur when there is a wider dissatisfaction of the people with the existing system or order and when people become determined that change is important. This generally takes place when there is a social change and people become more aware of their existing system and their drawbacks. This particular change of the mindset of the people in the society leads to revolution. It is also important for us to understand that revolution is not reform. Reform is mainly narrow in their scope and affect whereas revolution is something more wide and believes in the overthrowing of the existing order of the State and society. It brings another social, political and economic change in the society.

There are different causes for which revolution occurs. One of the important cause is the class conflict or struggle in the society. *Karl Marx* was one of the thinkers who has given a proper explanation of the revolutionary change through his dialectical and historical materialism. Moreover, the cultural changes in the society are also responsible for revolution. The presence of dominant cultural values or practices in the society may threaten the existence of a certain group of people. In due

course of time, this leads to a revolution. A popular revolution which had grabbed the world's attention was the French Revolution of the 1700's.

- **Counter Movements**

Counter Movements are those movements which generally take place in opposition to other social movements. Generally, when there is an emergence of a particular social movement, there also emerges a counter movement. The main agenda of such counter movements are basically to undermine the social movements which they are opposing. A prominent example of counter movements are the movements which are raised against movements for the global warming. While one group demands actions for global warming from the states, the other groups reject the idea that there is anything negative associated with the current problem of global warming. Likewise, the feminist movement in different parts of the world has also led to the emergence of different counter movements as well.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.12: The term social change itself reflects that it is the alteration of the existing order of the society. (True/False)

.....

Q.13: Social Change and social ..... have a close relationship with each other. (Fill in the blank)

Q.14: Mention the different impact of social change?

.....



5.7 LET US SUM UP

- Change is one of the most permanent laws of nature. Everything changes with time. Nothing is permanent. All matters in the universe go through a phase of transition, transformation or substitution, including the society. A society has been under a constant change since its inception.

- Social change basically involves two changes one is the macro changes and other the micro changes. The changes which occur at the institutional and structural levels of society are the macro changes whereas the changes which take place daily are the micro changes.
- We must remember that there are many factors which are responsible for social change. Some of them includes, the demographic, natural, technological, cultural and economic factors.
- The idea of social change has been interpreted in many forms, and as such, it has lead to the emergence of different theories. The theories of social change include Determination Theory, Evolutionary Theory, Cyclical Theory, Economic Theory and Religion Theory.
- The term social change itself reflects that it is the alteration of the existing order of the society. When there is a social change, it always leaves its traces in the society. There are different impacts that social change can bring along with them. Some of them include reform, revival, revolution, and counter movements.



5.8 FURTHER READING

1) Jayal, N.G. (2001). *Democracy in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
2) Rao, M.S.A. (2008). *Social movements in India.* New Delhi: Manohar Publishers.
3) Shah, G. (2004). *Social movements in India.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.



5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: True

Ans to Q No 2: Universal

Ans to Q No 3: The process of change of the society in different variations which includes the social structure, social institutions, social practices, social behaviors, social relations, traditions and habits and etc. can be termed as the social change.

Ans to Q No 4: According to Gillin and Gillin, the variations in the accepted way of life of the people in the society is social change. The social change may take place due to the changes in the geographical locations or the cultural elements and also due to the composition of the population.

Ans to Q No 5: True

Ans to Q No 6: Culture

Ans to Q No 7: The term cultural lag refers to the notion that culture takes time to catch up with technological innovations, and that social problems and conflicts are caused by this lag.

Ans to Q No 8: The different factors of social change are the demographic, natural, technological, cultural and economic factor.

Ans to Q No 9: True

Ans to Q No 10: Time

Ans to Q No 11: The theories of social change include the Determination Theory, Evolutionary Theory, Cyclical Theory, Economic Theory and Religion Theory.

Ans to Q No 12: True

Ans to Q No 13: Revolution

Ans to Q No 14: Major impacts of social change include reform, revival, revolution, and counter movements.



5.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : It was mainly _____ who greatly contributed to the idea that religion is solely responsible for bringing about a change in society. (Fill in the blank)

Q. 2 : Human beings and the physical environment depend on each other. (True/False)

Q. 3 : What is the difference between social movement and social change?

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

Q. 1 : Describe in brief any four factors of social change.

Q. 2 : Define social change.

Q. 3 : Describe in your own words any of the contemporary social movement in the Indian society.

Q. 4 : What do you understand by counter movement?

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

Q. 1 : Explain the different impacts of social change.

Q. 2 : Critically discuss the different factors of social change.

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UNIT 6: MARXIST AND POST-MARXIST THEORIES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Marxist Theory of Social Movement

6.4 State and Societal Revolution in Capitalist Society

6.5 Post-Marxist Theory of Social Movement: Gramsci's Perspective, Louis Althusser's Structural Perspective, Nicos Poulantzas Perspective on Social Movement

6.6 Let Us Sum Up

6.7 Further Reading

6.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.9 Possible Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- know about the Marxist Theory of Social Movement
- explain the State and Societal Revolution in Capitalist Society
- discuss the Post-Marxist Theory of Social Movement

6.2 INTRODUCTION

A social movement is basically a mass movement or can be regarded as a collective effort of the people in order to bring a change or resist a change. We have already learnt that change is inevitable. But, the changes could be positive or negative for a society and its people. When there prevails a negative change which contradicts the interest and welfare of the masses people come together and try to change the existing order through the means of social movement. The concept of social movement has been theorized by many thinkers. This chapter therefore will provide an effective insight to the Marxist Theory of social movement. Moreover, it also deals in understanding some of the prominent post-Marxist theories.

6.3 MARXIST THEORY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Marx was a famous German philosopher of nineteenth century. The theories of Marx actually appeared at the middle of the nineteenth century due to the oppressive conditions which prevailed in the society as a result of the capitalism system. Coming to the main point, we must mention that Karl Marx, did not specifically put forward a theory of social movement. His analysis of the relationship between the have and have not in society that existed in different phases of history produces the ideas which in turn also substantiates concept to the problem of social movement. The left revolutionary movements are all based on the ideas generated from Marxism. In fact, there are so many elements present in the theories of Marx that provides impetus towards social movements.

Marx borrowed from Hegel the concept of historical materialism or what is known as materialistic interpretation of history. He applied this concept to social and economic conditions of life. It became the basis of his subsequent political philosophy. Marx believed that the character of a man was formulated by the way in which he earned money. He believed that the basis of the whole economic system was the system of production and exchanges of products. It was a regular and continued process and also a historical fact which could not be denied. According to him, matter is the main element of the universe. It is something which gives shape to the social institutions. This matter undergoes a dialectical process due to the inherent tensions and the process continues until and unless a perfect material condition is achieved or come into existence. Class conflict is also another by product of this entire process.

Social change is the central analysis of the Marxian thought. Marxist theory of social change is closely associated with class struggle, which is deeply rooted in the economic structure of the society. In every society which emerged during different phases of time, there are two classes and the struggles and contradictions between them lead to social change. During different phases of time, these two classes were known by different names. But, there is a point which is common and this is the

relationship between them i.e. of domination and exploitation. As *Karl Marx* rightly remarked that 'freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another'.

Karl Marx always believed that history of the hitherto existing struggle is nothing else but that of class struggle or class warfare. In this class struggle, the poor are always fighting for their very existence. They are not properly rewarded and are even not paid for the work which they do. The rich are exploiting the poor by keeping with themselves what should actually belong to the poor workers. This exploitation is not of recent origin but is continuing since time immemorial. The poor are struggling for their very existence in this world and this is bound to go as long as the classes exist in this world. He further clarified that with the development in the forces of production, one mode of production is being replaced by another but the class conflict is not abolished. In fact, it again reappears under the new social order. Therefore, the ancient slave owing society was characterized by class conflict between the master and the slave, the medieval feudal society by class conflict between the lord and the serf, and the modern capitalist society by class conflict between the capitalist and the proletariat.

Now, coming to the production part, production mode are communally owned during primitive communism. Ancient slave-owning society in which the means of production are owned by masters and labour for production is done by the slaves. The medieval feudal society was one in which the means of production are owned by feudal lords and labour for production is done by serfs and the modern capitalist society in which the means of production are owned by capitalists and labour for production is done by the proletariat.

Marxism also viewed another factor which paved the way for social movement- that is the 'surplus value'. According to this concept, the working classes are not paid as much as they produce but are paid for their very existence so that they should work and always depend upon the capitalists.

The capitalists have a tendency to save something from the labour of every labourers which they claim as their legitimate right or profit. This surplus of labour makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. It is through this surplus value that monopolistic tendencies develop and each capitalist tries to capture either one market or the other on monopolistic lines. Marxism provides a glaring example of exploitation of the workers under the capitalist model of state and society.

Marx was of the opinion that with the passage of time small capitalist will disappear as they shall not be in a position to compete with the rich and shall become proletariat. Generally, the number of preliterate will increase and the forces of production will be controlled by a few capitalist on monopolistic basis. This monopoly will in turn create troubles for the proletariat converting their life into a miserable one. In this condition, the workers will have no alternative but to rise in revolt against the capitalists. Marx believed that the rich will be crushed and the proletariat will finally establish their rule. The rule of the proletariat however will not disregard the interests of the rich but will always safeguard the poor as well.

A classless society was the ultimate objective of Marxism. Karl Marx's ideal society was one in which there was neither class distinction nor disparity between the rich and poor. It was a society in which all will get according to their needs. He believed that since power corrupts man, the power could also be misused by the proletariat. But, he was convinced that once the means of production comes under the control of the working class, it could safely be presumed that class distinction would disappear. This will build a classless society. But, for this he insisted to carry forward the proletarian revolution.

Marxist theory of social movement is an important element of the dialectical materialism. According to the dialectical framework of analysis, the development of the thesis and antithesis is always slow and steady. But, the nature of the appearance of the synthesis is something sudden

due to the clash between the thesis and antithesis. No stage of historical development would come to an end until it restrains the forces of production. Therefore, before any particular change in any society, the productive forces develop full. This something which the Marxist terms as revolutionary change in which the entire structure of the society transformed itself until a new society in its place is overthrown. Revolution is therefore regarded as the midwife of social change in Marxist sense. For any important social change, the epoch making is always the outcome of a revolution.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Marx borrowed from Hegel the concept of historical materialism or what is known as the materialistic interpretation of history. (True/False)

.....

Q.2: A _____ was the ultimate objective of Marx. (Fill in the blank)

Q.3: Marx was of the opinion that with the passage of time small capitalists will disappear as they shall not be in a position to compete with the rich and shall become proletariat. Elucidate.

.....

Q.4: Briefly explain how Marxism has viewed 'surplus value' as the factor which paves the way for social movement.

.....

.....

6.4 STATE AND SOCIETAL REVOLUTION IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Marxism provides ample light on the nature of the State and how the State in a capitalist society undergoes a societal revolution, what factors are responsible for the revolution and what are the final goals of the revolution.

Marxism view did not believe in the existence of State was from a very long time. It believed that there was presence of societies in which there was actually no State. It was only at a particular stage of history when there was division created in the society. The people were divided between two groups, the haves or the privileged and the have-nots or the non-privileged. The State was then created in order to keep the interests of the haves intact and to create conditions of dominance and exploitations for the have nots. The state emerged as an organized body of power of the privileged class. The State is therefore neither a natural nor an essential body but, in the capitalist society, it was created intentionally and alienated accordingly.

In the capitalist society, the State always serves as an instrument of domination and coercion for the capitalist who is the main owner of the forces of productions. The State is responsible for performing different political, economic and ideological functions. But, these functions always intended to benefit the capitalist. It uses its coercive and repressive power through a mechanism of law, police and bureaucracy in order to resolve any conflict that emerges between the capitalists and workers. It contains the class struggle so that it does not make any harm to the capitalists. Moreover, the State makes necessary arrangement to secure the property interests of the capitalist. The economic policies of the State and all the decisions that are made by the State are actually the decisions of the capitalists who wanted to make their hold stronger by manipulating all the legislations and laws in their favour. All the policies of the State governing wages, prices, taxes, profits, trade unions, press, radio and television are designed in such a way as to serve the interests and profits of the capitalists. In other words, we can refer the State as the hand-maid of the capitalist in a capitalist society. *Marx* viewed that the State maintains armies, prison, and similar other institutions simply to protect and safeguard the rich or ruling classes. The privileged classes of the past maintain their privilege only through these arms of oppression and with the solid backing of the State. The State in the capitalist society therefore works to exploit the poor.

However, as mentioned above, with the passage of time, the small capitalists will disappear as they shall not be in a position to compete with the rich and shall become proletariat. Generally, the number of preliterate will increase and the whole forces of production will be controlled by a few capitalist on monopolistic basis. This monopoly will in turn create troubles for the proletariat converting their life into a miserable one. In this condition, the workers will have no alternative but to rise in revolt against the capitalists. Marx believed that the rich will be crushed and proletariat will finally establish their rule. The rule of the proletariat however will not disregard the interests of the rich but will always safeguard the poor as well. In other words, this is the stage in which there would be a societal revolution in the capitalist society.

The need for societal revolution is very much strong according to Marxism because the present society and State can be changed only when there would be a societal revolution which will throw away the existing system of dominance and exploitation by the use of force and not by peaceful means. Marx believes that when the proletariat will capture power from the capitalists and the means of production will come under their control, a new system of production will emerge The new society will hand over the means of production to the community as a whole and not to any individual. He believes that in the last phase of the revolution, the capitalists are bound to be thrown out of power and the proletariat shall then capture authority. It is then alone that a classless society will emerge and the existing class distinction will disappear. When the proletariat will capture power, the means of production will come in the hands of the working class and then there shall be none to be exploited. It will be a society which will strive towards a common welfare of the masses.

ACTIVITY 6.1



Try to list out and figure out whether the Indian society has experienced any new form of such transformation of the society in the past.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: Marx did not believe that the State was created to fulfill the interest of the capitalist class. (True/False)

.....

Q.6: Marx believed that when the _____ will capture power from the capitalists and the means of production will come under their control. (Fill in the blank)

Q.7: Briefly explain how Marx views social movements and their emergence.

.....

Q.8: What is the nature of the State according to Marx?

.....

.....

6.5 POST-MARXIST THEORIES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Marxist Theories have provided a view on social movement by focusing on two contradicting social class, the capitalist and workers. However, there emerged post-Marxist theories which reinterpreted the ideas and provided new vision to social movement. Some of the prominent thinkers who fall under the category are *Antonia Gramsci, Louis Atthusser,* and *Nicos Poulantzas.*

- **Antonio Gramsci:**

Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian Marxist. He was the one who reinterpreted Marxism. He revised the strategy of entire strategy of the socialist revolution and provided an alternative one, which according to him is more appropriate. Through his theory, he builds an important connection between Classical Marxism and Neo-Marxism. He dealt in a deep analysis of the capitalist society. It must be noted here that he was an adherent supporter of the Russian Revolution but he was at the same

time critical of the approach of the movement initiated by the communist party of Italy. He was very much vocal with his thoughts for which he was even considered a threat to his authority. He was put under prison in 1926 and died finally in 1937. During his last days at prison, he did remarkable works which were later published after his death as the *Prison Notebooks.*

Gramsci through his political thought tried to convince the Marxists that mere focusing on the economic domain to understand the problems of society is a half served approach. He wanted the Marxist to come out from the confinement of the analysis of the economic sphere and continue their ideological warfare in the field of culture, art, and literature and philosophical questions. The revolutionaries must break into the autonomous institutions like the civil society. This will help them to create an atmosphere where there would prevail new mass consciousness which will be informed by the socialist value system. Moreover, Gramsci was also opposed to any form of dictatorship either of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. He did not support the idea of using social revolution as a tool to establish a State which is based on coercive forces, rather he wanted to democratize all the institutions of the society and State. This can be done, according to Gramsci when the State will be regulated by the society and where the decision making would be based on consensus. He strived towards inculcating socialist values in the minds of the people.

According to him, hegemony prevents the society from thinking freely and makes life and thoughts homogeneous. This is done through structures of domination in the culture of the capitalist society. According to him, the civil society, prescribes certain rules of behaviour and asked the people to follow the authority or commands of the ruling class. This structure is misused by the capitalist and makes it work for their own interest. Therefore, at the time of any injustice in the society and its people, impression of justice prevails due to the presence of the structures. Therefore, hegemony as regarded by Gramsci as the condition in which power is exercised with the consent of its subject.

- **Louis Althusser:**

In order to understand Louis Althusser's structural perspective of social movement, first we need to understand what neo-Marxism is. Basically neo-Marxism is not a static doctrine, it is concerned with different issues which includes humanism, structuralism, existentialism, inequality of status and power, psycho-analysis, and economic imperialism. It is a study which is based on the fundamental principles of Marxism but also tends to move towards new aspects. It does not limit itself to just class conflict between the capitalist and workers on economic issues but also try to understand the nature of dominance of the ruling class over the ruled class or dependent class. Some of the neo-Marxist support Hegel's interpretation of alienation and dialect or dialectic. Whereas some have departed from Hegel and have associated with existentialism or structuralism.

In the neo-Marxist theory, it is *Louis Althusser* (1918-80) who is the chief advocate of structuralism. *Althusser,* was a French Philosopher who provided an idea that the nature and form of any entity or actions of any human being are determined by their underlying structures. The main aim of the structural approach is to identify the structures which are basically hidden and remain underneath. Examples are language, behaviour, culture and psychology. But, these structures have a large influence on human beings thus determining the nature of dominance. *Althusser* therefore, put forwarded a new idea of interdependence of base and superstructure. He advocated that for social revolution, the base is not all the time necessary. Revolution can be started from any part of superstructure and then it will spread slowly to other parts of the superstructure as well as to the base. For example, revolution can be started from literature, folklore, mass media, religion and then it will be spread to legal and political structures, morals, social practices and economic structures.

- **Nicos Poulantzas:**

Poulantzas (1936-1979) was a Greek-French philosopher and sociologist. He was an ardent supporter of Marxist principles and was a well-known figure next to *Louis Althusser*. He was popularly recognized as

a structural Marxist too. He was famous for his work on the State and Marxist analysis of fascism and social class of the contemporary world system. Through his ideas, he had also provided deep insight to the study of social movement.

The theory of the State is significant. According to the instrumental Marxists, the State is nothing but an instrument which is owned by a particular class and which uses it for their own interests. But, this particular idea of State being a mere instrument is rejected by him. He believed that the capitalist class narrowly focuses on short-term profit and do not indulge in maintaining the power of a class as a whole. But, Poulantzas argued that the State is an autonomous body and free from the influences of the capitalist class but still the State ensures the smooth operation of the capitalist society, and as a result, it benefits or serves the interests of the capitalists' class. He further strived that the State must always take into consideration the interest of the oppressed class. And according to him, it is done by making class alliances, where the dominating class associate themselves with the oppressed class and this itself is necessary for the existence of capitalism. Poulantzas strongly believed that if such an alliance is not established then attempts are made to suppress any opposing movements by the ruling class. Then, there could be possibility of the outbreak of a socialist movement.



LET US KNOW

Neo-Marxism refers to some new trends in Marxist theory which seek to review the conditions prevailing in the contemporary world in the light of relevant tenets of Marxism. Neo-Marxism may be distinguished from the Classical Marxism or Orthodox Marxism as it does not subscribe to Economic Determinism, nor confines its attention to securing economic welfare of people. It undertakes an analysis of the subtle methods of dominance and dependence at various levels of contemporary society- such as economic, sociological, political, cultural, and psychological levels and strives to work out the way of human emancipation.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.9: *Gramsci* established a connection between Classical Marxism and Neo-Marxism. (True/False)

.....

Q. 10: In the neo-Marxist theory, it is _____ who is the chief advocate of structuralism. (Fill in the blank)

Q. 11: What is the main argument of Poulantzas regarding the State?

.....

.....



6.6 LET US SUM UP

- A social movement is basically a mass movement or can be regarded as a collective effort of the people in order to bring a change or resist a change. The changes may be positive or negative for a society and its people. When there prevails a negative change which contradict the interest and welfare of the masses, people come together and try to change the existing order through the means of social movement.
- Marx was a famous German philosopher of the nineteenth century. The theories of Marx actually appeared at the middle of the nineteenth century due to the oppressive conditions which prevailed in the society as a result of the capitalist system.
- Marx borrowed from Hegel the concept of historical materialism or what is known as materialistic interpretation of history. He applied this concept to social and economic conditions of life. It became the basis of his subsequent political philosophy.
- Karl Marx always believed that history of the hitherto existing struggle is nothing else but that of class struggle or class warfare. In this class struggle, the poor are always fighting for their very existence. The rich are exploiting the poor by keeping with themselves what should actually

belong to the poor workers. This exploitation is not of recent origin but is continuing since time immemorial.

- A classless society was the ultimate objective of Marx. Karl Marx's ideal society was one in which there was neither class distinction nor disparity between the rich and poor. It was a society in which all will get according to their needs.
- Marx provides ample light on the nature of the State and how the State in a capitalist society undergoes a societal revolution, what factors are responsible for the revolution and what are the final goals of the revolution.
- In the capitalist society, the State always serves as an instrument of domination and coercion for the capitalist who is the main owner of the forces of productions. The State is responsible for performing different political, economic and ideological functions. But, these functions are always intended to benefit the capitalist.
- The need for societal revolution is very much strong according to Marx because the present society and State can be changed only when there would be a societal revolution which will throw away the existing system of dominance and exploitation by the use of force and not by peaceful means.
- Marxist Theories have provided a view on social movement by focusing on two contradicting social class, the capitalist and workers.
- Many post-Marxist theories reinterpreted the ideas of Marx and provided new vision to social movement. Some of the prominent thinkers who fall under the category are- *Antonia Gramsci, Louis Atthusser,* and *Nicos Poulantzas.*



6.7 FURTHER READING

1) Barker, C., Laurence C., John, K. and Ali, G.N. (2013). *Marxism and social movements.* Leiden: Brill Press.

2) Therborn, G. (2010). *From Marxism to post-Marxism*. London: Verso.



6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: True.

Ans to Q No 2: Classless society.

Ans to Q No 3: According to Marx, the number of preliterate will increase and the whole forces of production will be controlled by a few capitalist on monopolistic basis. This monopoly will in turn create troubles for the proletariat converting their life into a miserable one. In this condition, the workers will have no alternative but to rise in revolt against capitalists. Thus, Marx believed that the rich will be crushed and proletariat will finally establish their rule.

Ans to Q No 4: According to this concept, the working classes are not paid as much as they produce but are paid for their very existence so that they should work and always depend upon the capitalists. The capitalists have a tendency to save something from the labour of every labourers which they claim as their legitimate right or profit. This surplus of labour makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. It is through this surplus value that monopolistic tendencies develop and each capitalist tries to capture either one market or the other on monopolistic lines.

Ans to Q No 5: False.

Ans to Q No 6: Proletariat.

Ans to Q No 7: The need for societal revolution is very much strong according to Marx because the present society and State can be changed only when there would be a societal revolution which will throw away the existing system of dominance and exploitation by the use of force and not by peaceful means. Marx believes that when the proletariat will capture power from the capitalists and the means of production will come under their control, a new system of production will emerge The new society will hand

over the means of production to the community as a whole and not to any individual. He believes that in the last phase of the revolution, capitalists are bound to be thrown out of power and the proletariat shall then capture authority. It is then alone that a classless society will emerge and the existing class distinction will disappear.

Ans to Q No 8: In the capitalist society, the State always serves as an instrument of domination and coercion for the capitalist who is the main owner of the forces of productions. The State is responsible for performing different political, economic and ideological functions. But, these functions are always intended to benefit the capitalist.

Ans to Q No 9: True.

Ans to Q No 10: Louis Althusser.

Ans to Q No 11: Poulantzas argued that the State is an autonomous body and free from the influences of the capitalist class but still the State ensures the smooth operation of the capitalist society, and as a result, it benefits or serves the interests of the capitalists' class.



6.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : According to _____ Marxist, the State is nothing but an instrument which is owned by a particular class and uses it for their own interests. (Fill in the blank)

Q. 2 : Karl Marx always believed that the history of hitherto existing struggle is nothing else but that of class struggle or class warfare. (True/ False)

Q. 3 : What is the difference between Marxism and neo-Marxism?

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

Q. 1 : Describe in brief the Marxist Theory of Social Movement.

Q. 2 : Explain the State and societal revolution in a capitalist society.

Q. 3 : Describe in your own words whether the post-Marxist theories are justified in their arguments.

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

Q. 1 : Explain the perspectives of Gramsci and Althusser towards social movement.

Q. 2 : Critically discuss the Marxist as well as post-Marxist theories of social movement.

*** ***** ***

UNIT 7: WEBERIAN THEORY OF SOCIAL ACTION

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Theory of Social Action

7.4 Types of Social Action

7.5 Features of Social Action

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.9 Possible Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the theory of social action
- analyse the features and types of social action
- understand the concept of 'ideal type'
- analyse the contribution of Max Weber to sociological theory.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Max Weber, a German sociologist, is regarded as one of the founders of modern sociology. Weber focused on the basic features of a modern industrial society. Largely known for his views on *ideal types* and on *religion and protestant ethics*, Weber also scrutinizes the issue of *social action*. Weber conceived of sociology as the science with the task of "the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects."[1] For Weber the concept of 'social action' was the "central subject matter" of his sociology.[2] As you finish reading the unit, you will be able to discuss the different aspects of Weberian theory of social action.

7.3 THEORY OF SOCIAL ACTION

According to Weber, human behaviour is qualitatively very different from other biological organisms. The question is, what makes human behaviour so different? What factors influence such behaviour? The answer is probably the presence of meanings and motives that underlie social behaviour.

The influence of 'neo-Kantian' ideas on Weber is well documented and it largely influences his views on social life. Wagner and Harpfer note-

> Weber developed a social science that is grounded in Neo-Kantian premises and proceeds in either a generalizing or an individualizing direction, depending on its scientific objective. By individualizing, social science becomes a cultural science. By generalizing, it becomes sociology, which is emancipated from its roots in the philosophy of history.

Therefore, the objective of sociology is very different from the positive sciences which seek to discover the patterns and uniformity of behaviour. In social sciences, understanding the motives and meanings of social action is very important. Explanation of any phenomenon will have to be linked with human motives. According to Weber, Swedberg notes:

> The social sciences, or as he called them the cultural sciences, differ from the natural sciences on two crucial points. The first is that they have to deal with something that the natural sciences do not have to take into consideration, namely, that their objects of study – human beings – have values and assign meaning to what they do, and that this influences their actions.

Hence, the positivist methodology is not enough to study and analyse human behaviour. It must be highlighted that Weber was not against generalisations in social sciences, but he did point out that understanding any social phenomenon is bound to be a complex issue for there are a number of variables involved. Only limited generalisations can be made in social sciences.

The influence of society and its structures on shaping the behaviour of individuals is well documented through the writings of Durkheim and Marx. While most of Weber's writing deal with structures such as religion, authority and capitalism, he also emphasizes the actions of the individuals and social interaction among individuals and groups.

Thus, according to Weber, "Social action is that action of an individual which is influenced by the actions and behaviour of other persons and by which its direction determined." In other words, it is somehow influenced, guided or determined by the actions of other individuals.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What is social action?

.....

.....

Q.2: What is the objective of sociology?

.....

.....

7.4 TYPES OF SOCIAL ACTION

Action is "social" in so far as its subjective meaning takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.[1] Social action had two important components. *Firstly*, every action taken by an individual has a reason attached to it. Therefore, it is important to understand the meaning associated with every such action. *Secondly*, social action is not something which is random or unplanned. Rather, over a period of time, certain actions and interactions become patterned behaviour. There are regularities involved in social action, which in turn become associated with laws and customs. Therefore, a sociologist must understand the factors which contribute to such patterned behaviour and meanings individuals attach to them. Cohen, Ira J., "Theories of Action and Praxis" in Bryan S. Turner, *The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, reflects upon the book *Economy and Society*, wherein Weber argued

that every social action has three important aspects- *Firstly*, there is a 'subjective meaning', wherein all aspects of the social world must be considered from the actor's point of view. Cohen further substantiates that for Weber, 'inanimate objects, birth and death, and the environment may be considered constants and nothing more than elements of a material world,' but these are interpreted by individuals differently at various times and places. *Secondly*, social relationships where there is plurality of actors matter. Social action may be individual acts, but it can only be meaningful in nature if 'social relationships' is considered. Plurality of actors will mean that every social action is bound to be interpreted in different ways leading to agreements and disagreements. *Thirdly,* in the long run, social relationships are 'stable'. Longevity of social relationships will depend upon the results that are being met through regular social actions. Its longevity helps in the continuity of traditions besides consolidating social institutions. Norms and rules get strengthened through the longevity of social relationships.

Ideal type

Weber advanced the *verstehen* method of analysis to understand any social behaviour; 'it is a methodological tool to explain not all behaviour, but behaviour which is of a social nature.' While explaining social action, this method gives importance to 'meanings' and 'sequence of motives'. Social reality is rather complex which cannot be comprehended by the human mind in totality. Therefore, the issue of 'ideal types' becomes very important in explaining social reality. For Weber, 'an ideal type is not a "schema" into which reality should be fitted as a "specimen". Rather, it "has the status of a purely ideal limiting concept against which reality is measured – with which it is compared"'. 'Ideal types' is a social construct which is equivalent to experimentation in natural and physical sciences. Cahnman points out that –

> 'the ideal type, then, is not a description of concrete reality, or even of the essential features of such a ; it is not a hypothesis; it is not a schema under which a real situation, or action, is

subsumed as one instance; it is not a generic concept or a statistical average. Rather, it is "an ideal limiting concept with which the real situation or action, is compared," so that it may be properly appraised in line with the categories of "objective possibility" and "adequate causation."'

Swedberg highlights that Weber's model of 'ideal types' helps explain reality in different ways-

- It allows the social scientist to take a first step in the analysis of a topic that is little known or explored. The ideal type may function as an "emergency safe havens until one has learned to find one's bearings while navigating the immense sea of empirical facts" .
- It helps the social scientist to get a better handle on empirical reality, and this is done primarily through a comparison of reality with the ideal type.
- When such a comparison is made, the social scientist may also make discoveries. Weber repeatedly says that the use of the ideal type is heuristic, and that this constitutes the most important reason for using this kind of concept.

Social action is different from behaviour. According to Weber, sociology is a comprehensive science of social action and he used his ideal type methodology to elucidate the meaning of 'action'. According to Max Weber, "An Action is 'social' if the acting individual takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course". In order to qualify for any action to be social, presence of meanings and existence of other individuals is imperative. A social act cannot be an isolated act or be done in isolation. Essentially, in society what exists is a chain of reciprocal social actions. Such social actions can be classified into four major types-

Types of action	**Description**
Goal rational action	When individuals pursue specific goals which are decided rationally and efficient means are used to achieve the same, it is known as 'goal oriented action'.

Types of action	Description
Value rational action	Sometimes, individuals seek goals which may not be rational, but may be pursued through rational means; such social actions are known as value rational action.
Traditional action	Customary action constitutes traditional action. There is continuity of behaviour based on the traditions and norms of the society and community.
Affective action	Sometimes, human behaviour is very much determined by particular situations. At times, such behaviour is very much emotionally expressed, it expresses the emotional state of the individual.

Christian Etzrodt in his article *'Advanced Modern Versions of Max Weber's Action Concepts'* (2005) neat identifies the key features of different types of social action.[4]

An action is **instrumentally rational** if the actor is evaluating different anticipated alternative results of possible actions and chooses the best of these alternatives. The evaluation of the alternatives is based on a judgment of the desired positive results minus the undesired secondary results, and all alternatives are compared simultaneously. And the choice of a specific action depends on its usefulness or its utility. Therefore, the value is in this action type, the end or result of the action. Instrumentally, rational social action is not only oriented to objects but also to the expected reactions of other actors to the performed act.

Value-rational action is on the other hand, for Max Weber, an action which is motivated by values that are not equivalent to the ends or results of actions. The reason for their performance "does not lie in the achievement of a result ulterior to it, but in carrying out the specific type of action for its own sake".

Affectual behaviour is therefore characterized by a utility-based evaluation of the ends or results of the behaviour but without a completely rational simultaneous selection procedure. Affectual behaviour can therefore be differentiated from instrumentally rational action, because of its chaotic nature based on a sequential selection procedure instead of a simultaneous selection mechanism. And affectual social action can be demarcated from instrumentally rational action, because of its altruistic criterion of evaluating

the alternatives instead of an egoistic criterion which modulates the strong emotional bonds between the actors.

For Weber, **traditional behaviour** is no longer a reasonable or meaningful action, because it is carried out automatically as a habitual reflex to a known stimulus. Traditional behaviour is as a result not a less "meaningful" behaviour as Weber stated. It is in contrast to the original type of meaningful action, because of its reliance on the traditional meaning structure, especially understandable.

Weber focuses on the patterns and regularities of individual action and rather than on collective behaviour. He was however well aware that any social action may involve a combination of all or any of the four ideal types of action.

- **Weber's contribution to Symbolic Interaction**

Sociologists trace the theoretical roots of the interactionist perspective in Max Weber, who in his book *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* highlighted that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world. Developed by in the latter half of the 19th century by the Chicago School, symbolic interactionism is a theoretical approach that sought to understand the relationship between humans and society and emphasized the importance of individual motives and their actions in understand social behaviour. According to this perspective, 'society and these larger social structures must be understood through studying social interactions that are based on shared understandings, languages, and symbols.'[5] Denzin points out that-

> The term "symbolic" in the phrase symbolic interaction refers to the underlying linguistic foundations of human group life, just as the word "interaction" refers to the fact that people do not act toward one another, but interact with each other. By using the term "interaction" symbolic interactionists commit themselves to the study and analysis of the developmental course of action that occurs when two or more persons (or agents) with agency (reflexivity) join their individual lines of action together into joint action.

This school emphasized that symbols play an important role in understanding social relationships. Symbols convey meanings, motives and attitude of an individual towards others.

Symbolic Interactionism		
Key people	**Key works**	**Main ideas**
W.I.Thomas and Znaniecki	The Polish Peasants in Europe and America (1918)	Thomas and Znaniecki explored the relationship between individuals and society, focusing on groups such as families and neighborhoods, and community ties, which they believed were key to social change. They argued that 'under the impulse of industrialisation processes in Poland and emigration to the United States- peasants were increasingly becoming economically rational workers and drifting away from traditional modes of social organisation and behaviour.[6]
G.H.Mead	Mind, Self and Society (1934)	Mead explains that the 'individual is also a subject, not merely an object. The self, then, consists of an internalization of an overt obstructed social process, and it mediates between the old and the new, between the traditional and the newly initiated, between the past and the demands of a future, or between an ideology and a utopia'.[7]
Herbert Blumer	Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Method (1969)	'The first premise is that human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them…. The second premise is that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. The third premise is that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.' [8]

Herbert Blumer argues that symbolic interactionism rests on three important premises-

1. Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them;

2. Meanings of such things derive from the social interaction that one has with one's fellows;
3. Meanings are handled in, modified through, an interactive process used by the person in dealing with things he encounters.[9]

According to Carter and Fuller, the basic tenets of symbolic interactionism would state that:

- individuals act based on the meanings objects have for them;
- interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural context in which physical and social objects (persons), as well as situations, must be defined or categorized based on individual meanings;
- meanings emerge from interactions with other individuals and with society; and
- meanings are continuously created and recreated through the interpreting processes during interaction with others.
- **Acts Explained**

Hewitt examines the different phases of a social act as identified by G.H. Mead who meant *to call attention to the interplay between the internal processes and external manifestations exhibited in human behaviour*. The individual's act does not consist merely of what may be observed by others, but also entails an internal process of control in which the individual directs conduct toward some goal or object.[10]

Basic Concepts of Symbolic Interactionism-Phases of the social acts	
Impulse	An act starts with an impulse, which occurs when our existing adjustment or line of activity is disturbed. In other words, we might simply suggest that an act begins with a problem to be solved, a goal to be reached, something to be overcome by the human being in the environment.
Perception	Here, we begin to name or designate objects and thus give our acts direction. The important point that must not be lost is that human beings define their situations. This is the second stage of the act.
Manipulation	At this stage, we take concrete steps to reach our goal.
Consummation	Finally, the act ends with consummation, when our original adjustment or line of activity is restored.
John Hewitt, Self & Society, 9th Edition, Allyn & Bacon, 2002.	

- **Implications and Conclusions**

Fararo argues that 'for sociology, the events of interest are those that involve complexes of social actions. These events are behaviours with subjective meaning, thereby calling for interpretive understanding in order to provide causal explanations.[11] Weber's aim was to analyse the meanings and motives of individual behaviour. By clearly identifying different types of ideal types of social action, Weber thought that sociology as a subject could understand social action during particular historical periods as well as in contemporary times. While Weber focused his attention on individual behaviour, he was well aware that norms, rules and traditions play an important role in shaping social actions. Weber sought to explain how social structures are rooted in individual social action. This interpretive sociology led to research methods like participant observation, ethnography studies and phenomenological analysis.

Wolfgang J. Mommsen has highlighted that by the 1970S there was sudden revival in Max Weber studies. His contribution to sociology and beyond can be identified by the fact that the following avenues of inquiry in and beyond are being pursued:

- research into his ideal typical reconstruction of Western history and the process of rationalization;
- research into the relationship between religious attitudes, social conduct and economic activities in both Western and non-Western cultures;
- concept of social change and the dichotomy of value-oriented and instrumental social action which is closely linked to problem of formal and substantive rationality;
- Weber's contribution to the study of history and his theory of politics and legitimacy, which attaches priority to the question of how individual freedom can survive in modern bureaucratic societies, whether capitalist or socialist.[12]

Weber's contribution to sociological theory and interpretive analysis has been well summed up by Patrick Gunn, who pointed out that 'interpretive understanding, interpretive sociology, and other modern forms of 'Verstehen' have allowed all of the social sciences to move away from positivist, determinist endeavors—all of which have fallen flat in social and behavioural science—and toward a more nuanced, humanized form of study.[13]



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: What is 'affectual behaviour'?

.....

.....

Q.4: Name two major works of Max Weber.

.....

.....

Q.5: What is 'symbolic interactionism'?

.....

.....

7.5 FEATURES OF SOCIAL ACTION

From the analysis of the Weberian theory of social action, the following features can be mentioned:

- Social action occur among individuals. It is possible only in the society. In other words, social action cannot occur in isolation.
- Subjective attitudes constitute social action only so far as they are oriented to the behaviour of others.
- Social action may be influenced by an act of past, present or future. It is the result or modification of some actions of some other individual but the modifying action may be occur in the past, present or future.
- Not every type of contact of human beings has a social character; this is rather confined to cases where the actor's behaviour is meaningfully oriented to that of others.

- Social action should have subjective meaning to another particular social action. For example, if two persons collide accidentally and without any motive, the collision will not be a social action. So, sociology is the study of social action and human behaviour which studies not only the behaviour but meaning. Thus, social action is the new name of sociology.
- Social action is that action of an individual which is influenced by the actions and behaviour of other persons and by which its direction determined. In other words, it is somehow influenced, guided or determined by the actions of other individuals.
- Social action is not identical either with the similar actions of many persons or with every action influenced by other persons.[14]

➢ **Concept of Verstehen**

According to Weber, "interpretative sociology considers the individual and his actions as the basic social unit," and he felt that the task of sociology was "to reduce [certain categories of human interaction] to 'understandable' action."[15] 'Verstehen' was originally developed by Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel as the method of 'Geisteswissenschaften'(i.e. humanities, which encompass philosophy, (art) history, philologies, musicology and religious studies) . According to Dilthey, 'Verstehen' explains the psychological reality of the individual, the ultimate basis of all human actions. While Dilthey and Simmel maintained that social actions must be understood in terms of the 'inner-motives' of the acting individuals, Weber defined 'Verstehen' as a method of empirical science which attempts to understand the 'meaning' of action, not the motives of acting individuals.[16] Weber argued that the sociologists should use 'Verstehen' ("to grasp by insight") in order to see beyond the social facts to the subjective meanings that people attach to their own behaviour.[17]



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.6: What is the meaning of 'Verstehen'?

.....

.....

Q. 7: What is interpretive sociology?

.....

.....



7.6 LET US SUM UP

- The concept of 'social action' was the "central subject matter" of Weber's sociology.
- Most of Weber's writing deal with structures such as religion, authority and capitalism. He also emphasizes actions of the individuals and social interaction among individuals and groups.
- According to Weber, "interpretative sociology considers the individual and his actions as the basic social unit," and he felt that the task of sociology was "to reduce [certain categories of human interaction] to 'understandable' action."
- Weber defined 'Verstehen' as a method of empirical science which attempts to understand the 'meaning' of action, not the motives of acting individuals.
- Weber focuses on the patterns and regularities of individual action rather than on collective behaviour. He was however well aware that any social action may involve a combination of all or any of the four ideal types of action.
- Weber's aim was to analyse the meaning and motives of individual behaviour. By clearly identifying different types of ideal types of social action, Weber thought that sociology as a subject could understand social action during particular historical periods as well as in contemporary times.



7.7 FURTHER READING

1) Allen, K. (2004). *Max Weber: A critical introduction*. London: Pluto Press.

2) Godlove, T.f. Jr. (Ed.). (2005). *Teaching Durkheim*. NY: Oxford University Press.

3) Henslin, J.M. (2015). *Essentials of Sociology: A down-to-Earth approach* (Eleventh Edition). Pearson.

4) Turner, B.S. (1992). *Max Weber: From history to modernity*. NY: Routledge.

5) Turner, S.P. (Ed.). (1993). *Emile Durkheim: Sociologist and moralist.* NY: Routledge.



7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Social action is that action of an individual which is influenced by the actions and behaviour of other persons and by which its direction determined. In other words, it is somehow influenced, guided or determined by the actions of other individuals.

Ans to Q No 2: The objective of sociology is very different from positive sciences which seek to discover the patterns and uniformity of behaviour. According to Weber, human behaviour is qualitatively very different from other biological organisms.

Ans to Q No 3: Affectual behaviour is therefore characterized by a utility-based evaluation of the ends or results of the behaviour but without a completely rational simultaneous selection procedure.

Ans to Q No 4: a. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

b. General Economic History-The Social Causes of the Decay of Ancient Civilisation.

Ans to Q No 5: Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical approach that sought to understand the relationship between humans and

society and emphasized the importance of individual motives and their actions in understand social behaviour.

Ans to Q No 6: 'Verstehen' as a method of empirical science attempts to understand the' meaning' of action'. Weber argued that the sociologists should use 'Verstehen' ("to grasp by insight") in order to see beyond the social facts to the subjective meanings that people attach to their own behaviour.

Ans to Q No 7: According to Weber, "interpretative sociology considers the individual and his actions as the basic social unit".



7.9 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : Mention two features of social action.

Q. 2 : For Weber, the concept of _____ _____ was the central subject matter of his sociology. (Fill in the blanks)

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

Q. 1 : What are the different types of social action?

Q. 2 : Briefly explain the concept of 'Verstehen'.

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

Q. 1 : Discuss weber's contribution to symbolic interactionism.

Q. 2 : Discuss the concept of 'ideal type'.

Q. 3 : Discuss Max Weber's theory of social action.

End notes:

[1] W. T. Tucker, 'Max Weber's Verstehen' , *The Sociological Quarterly,* 6(2), 1965, pp.157–165.

[2] Rob Stones, Theories of Social Action, Edited by Bryan S. Turner, The New Blackwell Companion To Social Theory, 2009 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, USA, p.83.

[3] Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff and Indermohan Virk, *Classical Sociological Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 218.

[4] For more details see Christian Etzrodt, Advanced Modern Versions of Max Weber's Action Concepts, *Ritsumeikan Social Sciences Review* , 2005.

[5] Kathy S. Stolley, *The Basics of Sociology*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 2005, p.28.

[6] **Giulia Sinatti, *The Polish Peasant Revisited. Thomas and Znaniecki's Classic in the Light of Contemporary Transnational Migration Theory*, Acta Sociologica 2(2) · February 2008, p.1.**

[7] D. L. Miller, 'George Herbert Mead: Symbolic Interaction and Social Change', *The Psychological Record,* 23(3),1973, p.303.

[8] **Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey 1969, p. 2.**

[9] ibid. p.2.

[10] John Hewitt, Self & Society, 9th Edition, Allyn & Bacon, 2002.

[11] Thomas J. Fararo, *Social action systems : foundation and synthesis in sociological theory*, Praeger Publishers,USA, 2002, p.49

[12] Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *The Political and Social Theory of Max Weber*, University of Chicago Press, 1989, p.194

[13] Patrick Gann, 'An Explication and Application of Max Weber's Theoretical Construct of Verstehen', *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, Volume 14, Number 2 (2017) , p.33

[14] Craig Calhoun, Joseph Gerteis, James Moody, Steven Pfaff and Indermohan Virk, Classical Sociological Theory, Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 218-228.

[15] W. T. Tucker, 'Max Weber's Verstehen', *The Sociological Quarterly,* 6(2), 1965, p.157.

[16] S. Herva,'The Genesis of Max Weber's Verstehende Soziologie', *Acta Sociologica,* 31(2),1988, p.143.

[17] The sociological perspective, available at http://www.csun.edu/~hbsoc126/soc1/chapter%201%20outline.pdf, accessed on 18.9.2019.

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UNIT 8: TALCOTT PARSONS' THEORY OF SOCIAL ACTION

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Talcott Parsons' Structural-Functionalism

8.4 Parsons' Theory of Social Action

8.5 Let Us Sum Up

8.6 Further Reading

8.7. Answers to Check Your Progress

8.8 Possible Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept of social action
- comprehend the concept of structural functionalism forwarded by Parsons
- understand the concept of AGIL.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), born in Colorado Springs (Colorado), became an instructor in Harvard University in 1927. He is considered to be one of foremost contributors to the development of sociological theory. By the 1960s, Parsons had become the dominant figure in American sociology. Often labeled as a 'grand theorist' his major works include- The Structure of Social Action (1937) The Social System (1951) and Towards a General Theory of Action (1951). He was greatly influenced by Max weber, Emile Durkheim, W. Pareto and Alfred Marshal. Parsons sought to build an 'ecology of sociology' wherein a general theoretical structure for sociology would integrate all the social sciences. Parsons concluded that ideas represent only particle truth and there is a need for a more holistic understanding of a phenomenon.

8.3 TALCOTT PARSONS' STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

Talcott Parsons' work *The Structure of Social Action* serves as the basic reference point of all his subsequent theoretical works. Employing the method of 'analytical realism', wherein 'the scientist commits himself to developing "systems of concepts" that 'adequately grasp' the central features of the world, Parsons elaborates on the issues of structures, functions and the need for equilibrium.[1] Kevin Dew in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Health, Illness, Behavior, and Society* (2014) highlights that 'a structural functionalist approach represents society as a system consisting of various subsystems.' Effectively, this theory focuses on two important things-'functions' and 'structures'. By "functions," theorists in the perspective generally mean consequences that benefit society as a whole, contribute to its operation, or increase its stability. "Structure," in its broadest sense, can refer to social arrangements 'such as stratification systems therefore are social structures, as are social institutions such as marriage'. According to the structural function, social systems are composed of interconnected parts. This theory argues that a society is a complex entity wherein different parts play an intricate role. The smoothness of functioning and greater coordination between the interdependent parts will lead to increased stability. The importance of various parts of a system can be analysed in terms of how each contributes to meeting the needs of the whole, thereby maintain stability and equilibrium. Any change in any part of the system will greatly affect the working of the system.

Why are there variations in cultural patterns? The answer to this question lies in the functioning of the system. Cultural patterns consist of norms, customs, traditions and institutions, and each of them play a key role in shaping individual as well as collective behaviour. Any disruption of such pattern will have a major impact on the society. Therefore, how does a system maintain itself or how is equilibrium maintained? This is what structural functionalism tries to answer. Structural functionalism largely argues that a society consists of structures and interrelated parts.

For Parsons, adoption of the structural functional approach was required to understand social reality. It must be recalled that Durkheim, through his concept of 'social facts', and later on Radcliffe -Brown had stretched upon this idea. Robert Merton also argues about functionalism through the concepts of power and coercion. For Parsons, the social system consists of actions of individuals. Social behaviour is about choices, and while responding to an act by another person, an individual is influenced as well as constrained by physical and cultural factors.

Allan in his book *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory* (2007) points out that there are sanctions attached to our behaviour and social interaction are guided by certain motivations and values which impose certain role expectations on the individual concerned. Therefore, each person acts according to acceptable norms which they inhabit. As behaviour gets repeated, it becomes institutionalized, and a role is created. Thus, the role of a person emerges through a social interaction process, but that individual is expected to conform to certain norms governing their roles. If every person fulfills their roles and expectations are consistently met, it is the state of equilibrium. Therefore, socialization and social control become very important. Adaptation to new roles is possible through 'role bargaining', which then creates new norms and it guides social action. Thus, Talcott Parsons constructed a theory of social action which argued that individual action is rooted in the norms of society and constrained by its values.

- **AGIL model**

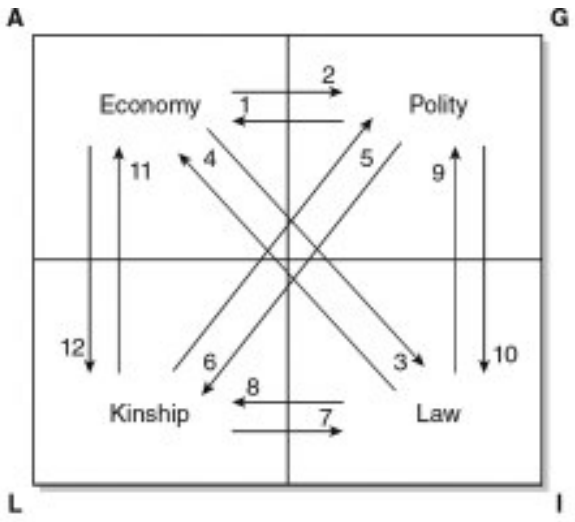
  Talcott Parsons believed that just like human beings, who perform certain functions to survive, society too has to perform certain things in order to function properly. The issue of maintenance of equilibrium depends on many factors. Change in any one part of the system will impact the other parts and subsequently affect stability and equilibrium of the system. According to Parsons, social roles and cultural expectations play an important part in influencing individual behaviour. Relations are interactive because every action of the individual has meanings and motivations attached to it.

In collaboration with Robert F. Bales and Edward A. Shils, Parsons formulated the AGIL schema in the Working Papers in the Theory of Action (1953). He argued that the system of action could be further broken down into subsystems of action. The behavioural organism helps in adaptation and transformation; the social system helps in integration; the personality system helps in goal attainment; and the cultural system helps pattern maintenance. Also known as the four function paradigm, Parsons believed that there are four functional imperatives that are necessary for all systems to survive.

- **Adaptation (A)** is an instrumental function by which a system adapts to its external environment or adapts the external environment to the system.
- **Goal attainment (G)** is a consummatory function that defines the goals and ends of a system and mobilizes resources to attain them. Goal attainment is generally oriented externally.
- **Integration (I)** is a consummatory function that manages the interrelationships of the parts of a system. The integration function maintains internal coherence and solidarity within the system.
- **Latent pattern maintenance (L)** is an instrumental function that supplies all actors in the system with a source of motivation. It provides normative patterns and manages the tensions of actors internal to the system.

Effectively, 'the four component parts or subsystems in the action frame of reference—culture, society, personality, and behaviour/organic energy— bring meaning to situations.' While these subsystems are distinct from one another, they help emphasise the fact that the system is an interactive whole where very part plays an important role. In advanced industrial societies, schools, courts, work place and families, all contribute to the maintenance of stability of the system. Analysing Parsons theory, Feuer and Black in their article *The Social Theories of Talcott Parsons: A Critical Examination* (1962) have further elaborated that 'every society, as a social system, must, according to the Parsonians, solve these four basic

system problems through subsystems of special roles: the polity provides the goal; the economy achieves the adaptation; and the integrative and tension management subsystems resolve emotional conflicts.' Furthermore, elucidating Parsons ideas, Turner argues that 'when actors from different sectors—and in this case, from differentiated institutional domains like economy, polity, law, family, and religion in the societal social system—interact, they often exchange their symbolic medium for that of another sector'.



*Only four institutional domains are presented to simplify interchanges
**Adapted from T. Parsons and N. J. Smelser, *Economy and Society* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1956)

Key Inter-Institutional Exchange

1–2	Economy gives productivity in exchange for capital made available by government
3–4	Economy gives new outputs and services in exchange for entrepreneurial services from law
5–6	Kinship gives political loyalty in exchange for polity´s allocation of rights kin authority in families
7–8	Kinship gives motivations to pattern conformity in exchange for pattern content of family forms
9–10	Law gives contingent support to polity in exchange for imperative coordination
11–12	Economy gives consumer goods and services to family in exchange for labor services

'Functions of Key Institutional Domains in a Societal Social System and Their Interchanges' by Jonathan H. Turner, Theoretical Sociology: A Concise Introduction to Twelve Sociological Theories, Sage 2014.

Highlighting Parsonian framework, Sharrock, Hughes and Martin in their book *Understanding Modern Sociology* (2003) reflect that 'the society will have to be organised in ways that both sustain and disseminate its main values throughout the sub-systems, so ensuring broad compatibility between them, and in ways that articulate them with the practical requirements of the various sub-systems themselves.[1] The society as a whole is centrally structured around a main set of 'shared values'. Issues of stability and cooperation are based on 'value consensus' that exists in a society. The pursuit of certain goals and values is essential for every society. Evaluating Parsons' theory, T. Burger in the article *Talcott Parsons, the Problem of Order in Society, and the Program of an Analytical Sociology* (1977) highlights that 'maintenance of equilibrium will be difficult because there is constant production of new norms as well as values and also there are is 'variety and competition in the normative realm'. Effectively, all order cannot be maintained through brute force alone, rather shared values and 'value consensuses will go to play an important role in promoting stability on the society.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What is 'function'?

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Q.2: What does AGIL stand for?

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Q.3: What is 'value consensuses?

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8.4 PARSONS' THEORY OF SOCIAL ACTION

Parsons' central concern was to develop a comprehensive and coherent conceptual scheme for sociology that could be applied to every society and

historical epoch and to address every aspect of human social organization.[3] For Parsons, classical economic theory assumes that human beings are rational and largely ignores the non-rational aspects of human behaviour. Likewise, he thought that positivism ignores the subjective elements of human action. While Parsons appreciated the efforts of the idealists for it attempted to study human qualities, values and morals, the problem was that it also explained issues of a society according to its uniqueness. Therefore, generalization could not have been possible. For Parsons, sociological theories must take into account the subjective dimensions but at the same time, it should also be able to develop general laws.

1. Sociological theory should be an adequately general theory which could be applied to different societies;
2. Sociological theory must be based on the 'principle of emergence', i.e. systems emerge with certain properties which cannot be solely explained through the interaction of its parts.
3. Based on voluntaristic principles, sociological theory must be an action theory. Essentially, it must take into account values, norms, goals and action choices of the individual.

Parsons in his book *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) proposed a general conceptual scheme for social action and subsequently analyses the concept of system. For him social action consists of the following-

- Social action is that behaviour by which an individual interacts with external forces after understanding and interpreting its action.
- For Parsons, all action is behaviour, but not all behaviour constitute social action. It is closely linked with an actor's perception about things and their meanings. Action is an outcome of what an actor perceives about an event and how he or she responds. Action is defined by its meaningfulness and it must be interpreted from the actor's point of view.
- The environment plays an important role in an actor's behaviour. The environment consists of social objects-*i.e.* other actors, cultural

environment (symbols, norms, values, signs etv) and the physical environment.

- Human action is bounded by the physical environment and it acts as a constraint on the actor's behaviour.

To summarise, social action consists of three basic elements-

1. The subject- Actor, which can be an individual, group or a collectivity;
2. The situation: Physical and social objects to which the actor relates to;
3. Cultural symbols: norms, values etc, which influence an actors' behaviour.

System of Social action:

For Parsons, human action exhibits the characteristics of a system. System helps us understand reality. If sociology has to be a science, to understand a behaviour, it must resort to a systemic analysis. Therefore, a system is-

- A unified whole made up of interdependent parts. Each part is a sub-system in its own and may also be treated as a system;
- Units or subsystems are relatively stable and there is a definite pattern of relationship;
- Each system operates within a boundary; there is symbiotic relationship between a system and the environment;
- A system is not fixed but rather dynamic; every system has certain needs -certain imperatives or functional pre-requisites and derived needs which are peculiar to each system only.
- Every social action is a system in its own and it consists of a complex act which can be broken down into smaller units.
- For Parsons, the idea of human behaviour is culturally shaped. Norms, values, symbols, beliefs etc. largely shape the cultural patterns and it influences individual behaviour as well as collective action.
- Cultural patterns are dualistic in nature-it creates a dilemma, for it forces the actor to make a decision. Others too have explained this

form of duality in a variety of ways, the most prominent being Ferdinand Tonnies whose ideas on the dichotomy of 'gemeinschaft' (applicable to community life, usually associated with rural life) and 'gesellschaft'(applicable to individual centred society, especially urban life) worth mentioning. Durkheim too argues about the distinction between mechanical and organic society in his book *The Division of Labour* (1893). For Parsons, the duality of cultural patterns in manifested in different ways-

1. ***Universalism versus particularism***: actors relate to others on the basis of general criteria or criteria unique or specific to the individual concerned;
2. ***Ascribed versus achieved***: actors relate to others on the basis of criteria of performance or 'achievement' or criteria of some form of endowment of 'ascription';
3. ***Specificity versus diffuseness***: actors relate to others for a specific, restricted purpose or in a general or holistic manner;
4. ***Affective neutrality versus affectivity***: actors relate to each other in a detached or instrumental fashion or with the engagement of affect and emotion.[4]

For Parsons, the choice of one pattern over another depends largely on the culture, but cultural patters of both 'gemeinschaft' and 'gesellschaft' can co-exist.



LET US KNOW

Gemeinschaft signifies a system of social relations where the concept of kinship, blood ties, friendship and neighbourhood are predominant. Gemeinschaft types of society is mostly found in the villages. In contrast, 'gesellschaft' system is prevalent in cities and industrial hubs where individuals become bound only by contract and commercial exchange.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: What is the 'principle of emergence'?

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Q.5: Name two major works of Talcott Parsons.

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Q.6: What is social action?

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8.5 LET US SUM UP

- Parsons sought to build an 'ecology of sociology' wherein a general theoretical structure for sociology would integrate all the social sciences.
- Parsons' central concern was to develop a comprehensive and coherent conceptual scheme for sociology that could be applied to every society.
- For Parsons, sociological theories must take into account the subjective dimensions but should also be able to develop general laws.
- Parsons argued that all action is behaviour, but not all behaviour constitutes social action. It is closely linked with an actor's perception about things and their meanings.
- According to Parsons, human action exhibits the characteristics of a system. System helps us understand reality.
- Cultural patterns are dualistic in nature-it creates a dilemma, for it forces the actor to make a decision.
- For Parsons, adoption of the structural functional approach was required to understand social reality.

- Through AGIL model, known as the four function paradigm, Parsons believed that there are four functional imperatives that are necessary for all systems to survive.



8.6 FURTHER READING

1) Allan, K. (2007). *The Social Lens: An Invitation to Social and Sociological Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
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8.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: By "functions," generally mean consequences that benefit society as a whole, contribute to its operation, or increase its stability.

Ans to Q No 2: Adaptation (A), Goal Attainment (G) Integration (I) and Latent pattern maintenance (L)

Ans to Q No 3: Value consensus means that the society as a whole is centrally structured around a main set of 'shared values' and maintenance of the same is important to achieve stability in society.

Ans to Q No 4: According to Parsons, sociological theory must be based on the 'principle of emergence', i.e. systems emerge with certain properties which cannot be solely explained through the interaction of its parts; values, norms, goals and action choices also matter.

Ans to Q No 5: a. The Structure of Social Action (1937)

b. The Social System (1951)

Ans to Q No 6: Social action is that behaviour by which an individual interacts with external forces after understanding and interpreting its action.



8.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions

Q. 1 : State the meaning of the concept of social action.

Q. 2 : Who wrote the book The Structure of Social Action (1937)?

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

Q. 1 : What is duality of cultural patterns?

Q. 2 : Write a note on the concept of AGIL?

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

Q. 1 : Discuss Parsons' framework of social action.

Q. 2 : According to Parsons, how is equilibrium in society maintained?

End notes:

[1] Valone, J. J. (1980). *Parsons' contributions to sociological theory: Reflections on the Schutz-Parsons correspondence. Human Studies, 3(1), 375–386.* doi:10.1007/bf02331823 , p.376

[2] Sharrock, W.W., Hughes, J.A. and Martin,P.J. (2003). Understanding Modern Sociology , Sage, London, 2003. p.33.

[3] Introduction Renée C. Fox, Victor M. Lidz, and Harold J. Bershady , available at https://www.russellsage.org/sites/default/files/fox_chapter1_pdf.pdf,p.2

[4] **Sociological Theorists: Talcott Parsons, available at http://www.grahamscambler.com/sociological-theorists-talcott-parsons/, accessed on 27.9.2019**

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1) Approximately how many hours did you spend for studying the units in the course? ☐☐☐

2) Please give your opinions (by ✓ mark) to the following items based on your reading of the block:

Sl. No.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I)	The SLMs of the course fulfil the learning objectives set out in the beginning of each unit					
II)	The units of the SLM could satisfy my academic needs and expectations					
III)	The Unit writers have excellent knowledge about the course contents					
IV)	Language and contents of the units were presented at a level which I could readily understand					
V)	Ample opportunity for participation in the activities provided in the units					
VI)	Used enough Illustrations (Diagrams, tables etc.) for conceptual clarity					
VII)	Quality of content is engaging, relevant, and up-to-date					
VIII)	The self check questions are very helpful					
IX)	The Possible/model questions and the answers to check my progress have benefited me a lot					

Additional Comments: *(Please feel free to provide your open comments)*

1) Which aspects of the SLM, according to you, worked well?

.....

.....

2) What sort of changes/improvements do you feel KKHSOU could implement to improve the overall quality of the SLM?

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.