



COURSE CODE: MASOD 402

COURSE NAME: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS  
IN INDIA

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND  
ONLINE EDUCATION  
TEZPUR UNIVERSITY**

**MASTER OF ARTS  
SOCIOLOGY  
BLOCK I**



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## **MSO-402: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

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# BLOCK I

## MODULE I: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT 1: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: DEFINITIONS,  
CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES

UNIT 2: THE SOCIAL BASE: CLASS, CASTE,  
ETHNICITY, GENDER, ROLE AND TYPES OF  
LEADERSHIP; RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERS  
AND THE MASSES

## MODULE II: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

UNIT 3: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:  
MARXIST AND POST-MARXIST

UNIT 4: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:  
WEBERIAN AND POST-WEBERIAN

UNIT 5: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:  
STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST

## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>MODULE I: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS</b>	
<b>UNIT 1: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: DEFINITIONS, CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES</b>	<b>4-19</b>
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 Objectives	
1.3 Conceptualizing and Defining Social Movement	
1.4 Characteristics of Social Movement	
1.5 Approaches to Study Social Movement	
1.5.1 Mass Society and Collective Behaviourist	
1.5.2 Relative Deprivation	
1.5.3 Resource Mobilization	
1.5.4 Political Process	
1.6 Classification of Social Movement	
1.6.1. New Social Movements	
1.7 Summing up	
1.8 Questions	
1.9 Recommended Readings and References	
<b>UNIT 2: THE SOCIAL BASE: CLASS, CASTE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, ROLE AND TYPES OF LEADERSHIP; RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERS AND THE MASSES</b>	<b>20-36</b>
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 Objectives	
2.3 The Social Bases of Social Movements	
2.3.1 Class	
2.3.2 Caste	
2.3.3 Ethnicity	

2.3.4 Gender	
2.4 The Nature of Leadership	
2.4.1 Types of Leadership	
2.4.2 Social Composition of Leadership	
2.4.3 Leadership, Movement and Challenges of Mobilization	
2.4.4 Leadership in Strategy and Framing Process, and Movement Outcomes	
2.5 Summing Up	
2.6 Questions	
2.7 Recommended Readings and References	
<b>MODULE II: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS</b>	
<b>UNIT 3: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: MARXIST AND POST-MARXIST</b>	<b>38-52</b>
3.1 Introduction	
3.2 Objectives	
3.3 Evolution of Marxism	
3.4. Features of Marxism	
3.4.1. Dialectical Materialism	
3.4.2. Historical Materialism	
3.4.3. The Concept Of Surplus Value	
3.4.4. The Concept Of Class Struggle	
3.4.5. Religion-The Opium Of The People	
3.4.6. The Establishment Of Communist Society	
3.4.7. The Theory Of Revolution	
3.5. Class Relations & Social Change	
3.6. Post Marxism	
3.6.1. New Social Movements And Post Marxism	
3.7 Summing Up	
3.8 Questions	
3.9 Recommended Readings and References	

<b>UNIT 4: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: WEBERIAN AND POST-WEBERIAN 53-69</b>	
4.1 Introduction 4.2 Objectives 4.3 Weber Revolution and Political Leadership 4.3.1 Revolution 4.3.2 Political Leadership 4.4 Charismatic Authority and Leadership 4.4.1 The Concept of Charisma 4.4.2 Charismatic Authority and Leadership 4.4.3 The Charismatic Community 4.4.4 The Routinization of Charismatic Authority 4.5 Post- Weberian Approach 4.6 Summing Up 4.7 Questions 4.8 Recommended Readings and References	
<b>UNIT 5: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST 70-82</b>	
5.1 Introduction 5.2 Objectives 5.3 Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalism and social change 5.4 Neil Smelser's Theory of Collective Behaviour 5.5 Summing Up 5.6 Questions 5.7 Recommended Readings and References	

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## **COURSE INTRODUCTION**

This course introduces the learners to the important conceptual and theoretical issues of social movement and its critical role in social transformation. It familiarizes them with various sociological approaches to the study of social movements. This course attempts to sensitize the learners with regard to the important social movements in India besides exposing the learners to the emerging social movements in recent times.

The course is divided into four Modules, each consisting of multiple units. This has been done to discuss the major concepts more elaborately and, in a learner-friendly way.

**Module I** gives an introduction to the paper. It consists of two units. **Unit 1** is basically an introductory unit. The unit introduces the learner to social movements and covers definitions, characteristics and types. **Unit 2** discusses the social bases of social movements.

**Module II** is about theories on social movements. **Unit 3** deals with the Marxist and Post-Marxist theories on social movements. **Unit 4** Weberian and Post-Weberian theories. On the other hand, **Unit 5** gives an overview of Structural-Functionalist theory in the context of social movements.

**Module III** focuses on social movements specifically in the context of India. The learners will get an insight into the Peasant Movement in India in **Unit 6**. **Unit 7** will help the learners to understand Dalit Movement in India. **Unit 8** explores the Tribal Movement. **Unit 9**, on the other hand, discusses the Labour and Trade Union Movement. **Unit 10** deals with Nationality and Sub-Nationality Movements in India.

**Module IV** is dedicated to the new social movements in India. The learners will be able to learn why these movements are labelled as ‘new’. **Unit 11** explores Women’s Movement in India while **Unit 12** analyses the Environmental Movements. **Unit 13** deals with Middle Class Movements



in India. On the other hand, Ethnic Movements in India are covered in **Unit 14**.

The complete course is divided into two Blocks. **Block I** contains Module I and II. **Block II** will have Module III and IV.

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# **MODULE I: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MOVEMENTS**

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## **UNIT 1: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: DEFINITIONS, CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPES**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Objectives

1.3 Conceptualizing and Defining Social Movement

1.4 Characteristics of Social Movement

1.5 Approaches to Study Social Movement

1.5.1 Mass Society and Collective Behaviourist

1.5.2 Relative Deprivation

1.5.3 Resource Mobilization

1.5.4 Political Process

1.6 Classification of Social Movement

1.6.1. New Social Movements

1.7 Summing up

1.8 Questions

1.9 Recommended Readings and References

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### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

As an important force of social change in the modern world, social movements focus of sociological thought and debate because of its strategic and dynamic nature. They are a universal feature in human society yet are unique because of the purpose that drives them. Although all social

movements are collective, they vary in forms, origins, strategies, organization, protests and intensity. In this paper, we shall learn these various dimensions of social movements, its typologies, and in particular, their histories in India.

The study of social movement is an important part of the social sciences. When sociology started to emerge as an academic discipline, it was greatly influenced by studies of social change and collective behaviour especially during and after the historical events of the Revolution, working-class protests, strikes, and union campaigns. Unlike the classics of Comte, Tocqueville, Marx, Durkheim, and Weber, it was Gustave Le Bon's work *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (2006) that specifically looked at crowds as unified actors that generated a mind of their own. While his ideas have been rejected today, collective identity and its formation in the understanding of movement still remain a key concept.

Across the sea, in America, it was the Chicago School of sociology that led the studies of collective behaviour. The studies here were influenced by the pragmatist philosophy of John Dewey and the social psychology of G.H Mead. Park and Burgess (1921) briefly looked at collective behaviour in their works and viewed it as an out of ordinary events which were both irrational and distinct from forms of everyday social interaction. Distinct to this was the 'symbolic interactionist' approach like that of Blumer's (1951), who argued that collective behaviour "is not based on the adherence to common understandings or rules" rather, it is behaviour formed or forged to meet undefined situations thus emphasising on meaning construction and social process.

The ideas of Turner and Killian (1957) built upon the Chicago School explained that crowds and movement groups are a diverse group and that participants are never completely separated from their ordinary lives and from the ordinary social norms. Neil Smelser's work *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (1962) on the other hand included phenomena as diverse as

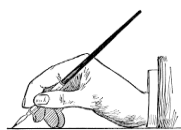
panics, crazes, hostile outbursts, reform movements, and revolutionary movements under one conceptual umbrella – collective behaviour, the assumption being that the same factors are at work in all these collective forms. Meanwhile drawing heavily on the European experience, Mannheim (1940), and Arendt (1951) focused on the political consequences of urban-industrial society shifted scholarly attention away from crazes, and riots, and other apolitical action, and situated the study of social movements in the political realm. Kornhauser's argued in his *The Politics of Mass Society* (1959) that in a modern urbanised and industrialised society, the informal centres of group attachment are replaced by impersonal and bureaucratic relations which also affected the collective action (Johnston, 2014).

The movements of the 1960s in the West brought about massive research leading to the redefinition of the concept of collective action, protests, mobilization, etc., leading to changes in the civil rights movement, students' movement, peace movement, etc. Prior to those changes in the 1960s, theorizing about collective behaviour and social movements was based more on systematic observation, informed reasoning, and logical deductions about causes and connections rather than on empirical research (Johnston, 2014).

Thus, the works of Gamson, Charles Tilly, Anthony Oberschall, John McCarthy, Mayer Zald, John Lofland, in the 60s-70s focused on the interests of challenging groups, and how these groups and organizations successfully mobilize to make their claims. Anthony Oberschall's *Social Conflict and Social Movements* (1973), for instance, contrasted with mass society and relative deprivation perspectives by arguing that organization was the key to social movement mobilization. McCarthy and Zald (1977) brought into the centre the concept of Social Movement Organisations or SMOs which incorporated into its features resource-rich groups that can effectively get out their message, organize activists, and influence the

public and political. Tilly's important input was how he integrated the role of the state – how it shapes opportunities to act – and the organization of the polity, defined as the broad array of political players and nonplayers (Johnston, 2014). Thus, we see how the literature on social movements have grown and become an established discipline in social sciences. In the following sections, we shall learn the various concepts related to social movement and also understand its characteristics. We shall also revisit some of the key approaches mentioned here in more details in the following sections.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. What did we learn about social movements so far?

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2. What are the different perspectives of studying social movements?

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### 1.2 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we will introduce the concept of social movements and its significance as a unit of sociological study. We will examine its characteristics, the various approaches to understanding social movements and typologies. By the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Explain the basic meaning and definition of a social movement;
- Describe the characteristics and features of a social movement;



- Explain the various approaches to understand the concept;
- Elaborate on the various types of a social movement.

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### 1.3 CONCEPTUALIZING AND DEFINING SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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The term 'movement' in the Oxford English Dictionary is defined as 'a series of actions and endeavours of a body of persons for a special object'. However, adding a sociological dimension to it implies the presence of autonomy, and self-generated action, leadership, a mechanism of organization and disciplined (Wilkinson, 1971). In addition, the language, ideas and styles of movements inevitably reflect wider cultural changes. Social movements are thus, an important expressive phenomenon that is culturally distinct and assimilatory in a society.

<b>Stop and Read</b>
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<b>Definitions of Social Movement</b>
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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neil J. Smelser (1962) defines social movements "as an organised group effort to generate or to resist social change"</li> <li>• Sidney Tarrow (1994) 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."</li> <li>• Mario Diani (1992) maintains that social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action, are</li> </ul> |
|--|

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

Social movements have to be conceptualized within the framework of conflictual collective action. According to Diani (1999), this action represents an oppositional relationship between actors who seek control of the same stake – be it political, economic, or cultural power – and in the process make negative claims on each. Secondly, social movements are also accompanied by dense informal networks between individuals who engage in sustained exchanges of resources in pursuit of common goals. This network involves the coordination of specific initiatives, the regulation of individual actors' conduct, and the definition of strategies by the members. Finally, social movements are in its core the realisation of collective identities. It brings with it a sense of common purpose and shared a commitment to a cause thus shaping the action.

Johnston (2014) argues along similar lines and conceptualizes social movement within the broad framework of the structural sphere, ideational-interpretative sphere and performances. By structural sphere, he means the fixed network relations among groups, organizations and individual participants that characterize social movements and creates inter-linkages among organizations in order to facilitate resources that are brought for mobilization. Secondly, ideational-interpretative sphere constitutes the mental scheme of ideas that guide interpretation of events for movement participants, the political elites as well as the audience. Lastly, Johnston designates all social movement as performances that involve street protests, demonstrations, strikes, marches that are symbolic and allows those who witness, the space to interpret and then act upon it.

Thus, social movements can be defined as a collective pursuit of social change goals, presented through such as marches, sit-ins, protests, demonstrations, and rallies etc. They are structurally diverse, i.e., made up of numerous, networked groups, organizations, and individual adherents yet are continuous over time partly based on a movement's collective identity (Johnston, 2014).

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#### **1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

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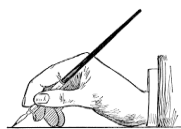
While social movements can be both organized and spontaneous, they nevertheless require certain key elements. All movements are a composite of collective action, networks, state, and political cleavages that utilizes cultural knowledge in order to transform the structure. They are not simply a crowd; they possess organizational mechanisms which are supposed to sustain membership through periods of inaction and waiting. Furthermore, unlike crowds movements engage in communication and coordination expanding across a vast area, such as a nation or even the globe, thus going beyond the boundaries of an organization or organizations that may give it an identity. In the following paragraph, we shall look at some of the common characteristics of a social movement.

Firstly, all social movements are a collective effort which should be able to sustain the interest of a large number of people. Secondly, all social movements are generally oriented towards bringing about social change. Third, an important component of social movement is the presence of an ideology which justifies the collective action. Ideologies enable the collective to piece together their stories, identities which can help in the recruitment of its members. Fourth is the presence of leadership, i.e. the individual or groups of individuals who will represent the collective. Leaders will be the ones who come with ideas to take the movement ahead, organizing the opinion and resources. In addition, leaders also become the symbols of the movement, at times functioning as one even after their death, for example, Ambedkar still remains the symbol of Dalit movement in India and Martin Luther King Jr for the Black Rights Movement in the

United States. Such type of leadership is also associated with charismatic quality, who will inspire and mediate the people. Fifth, all movements are driven by a common goal or an objective that will drive the people. Sixth, no movement is possible without an organizational framework. The organizational framework will determine the roles of the members, leaders, and specifically the recruitment process. For example, nationalist, class, reformist and revolutionary movements may find expression in fully fledged political parties, pressure groups, trade unions, conspiratorial societies, or in youth, women's or cultural organizations, or in any combination of these (Wilkinson, 1971). Seventh, each social movement may adopt varying techniques to fulfil their goals. The techniques can range from peaceful protests, democratic methods to violent revolutions.

Social movements overall lack the stable structure of a formal organization such as a political party and can vary in terms of duration. Nevertheless, it can be seen that all social movements have a few basic elements and characteristics that are capable of sustaining membership, communication and coordination.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Write two characteristics of social movement?

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2. What role does leadership play in a social movement?

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## **1.5 APPROACHES TO STUDY SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

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According to Della Porta and Diani (2006), the study of social movements developed at an unprecedented pace during the 1960s. Prior to this social movements were analysed through the lens of collective behaviour, and looked at them as “dangerous mobs who acted irrationally” and “addressed the question of origins to the exclusion of almost all others, for they frequently saw movements as mistakes that were best avoided” (Goodwin and Jasper, 2015). The 1960s saw the participation of people who were educated and sympathised with the efforts of those at the bottom. Civil rights movement in the USA, women’s movement, environmental movements helped make a conceptual turn in the understanding of movements at large. Different theoretical perspectives and approaches have been used and developed over the years to give sociological insights into the development of social movement, its emergence and origins, maturation, success and failures. In this section, we shall look at some of the theoretical frameworks which have been used to understand the uniqueness of collective behaviour, the selection of facts, their patterns and its arrangements, and classification. These approaches also guide in the selection of facts, their patterns and its arrangement, classification and interpretation. Some of the major approaches such as Marxist, post-Marxist, Weberian, post-Weberian and structural-functionalist will be discussed in details in another unit. Here we shall be looking at primarily at collective resource mobilisation, and relative deprivation perspectives to the study of a social movement.

### **1.5.1 Mass Society and Collective Behaviourist**

Theorists such as Kornhauser (1959), Arendt (1951) and Lipset (1963), argued that social movements occurred when a individuals or group of individuals that were previously unorganized get together to change the social milieu and were generally characterised by cultural confusion, social heterogeneity, weak cultural integration, and a lack of attachments to

secondary group structures. Mass Society approach looks at social movement through the properties of societies, specify the "personality traits" and psychological states which those societies produce, and explain how these factors generate movements (Morris and Herring, 1984). Thus, mass societies, unlike well-integrated societies, lack networks that keep its members in check. Similar to mass society approach is that of collective behaviourist perspective who also view movements as non-institutionalised, non-routine attempts towards social change (Morris and Herring, 1984).

Like mass society approach, collective behaviourists view social movements as non-institutionalized efforts, and non-routine forms of collective action geared towards social change. Blumer (1951) viewed social movement as "amorphous, poorly organized and without form." Thus, social movements cannot be explained by prior social organization, norms, and culture because movements are emergent forms that acquire organization during their life cycles and once such forms become institutionalized they cease to be objects of inquiry as social movements (Morris and Herring, 1984). Rooted in symbolic interaction school, collective behaviourists tend to view movements through a social psychological orientation where structures exist only when actors apply meaning to them.

### **1.5.2 Relative Deprivation**

The theory of relative deprivation focuses on the significance of social psychological factor of relative deprivation as the source of political agitation, violence and revolution. While the ideas can be traced to Mosca, Pareto and Durkheim, it was popularly propagated by Ted Gurr (1970), whose theory incorporates within its area various forms of political violence such as turmoil which is relatively spontaneous and unorganized, conspiracy which is highly organized with limited participation, and lastly, internal war which is organised and involves mass participation (Morris



and Herring,1984). As the term suggests, the approach focuses on the actors' feeling of discrepancy or the disadvantage between their own expectations and those of others, especially when the former perceive that the opportunities to achieve them are somehow blocked. This according to Gurr, acts as the motivation link to potential violence. One of the limitations of this approach was that it could only offer an explanation for the genesis of such action but not its dynamics and have not explained how participants come together, nor how activities spread between people.

### **1.5.3 Resource Mobilization**

Representing a conceptual turn in the 1960s was the increasing focus on the social movement organisations (SMOs). This approach looked at the SMOs as industries that emphasis on the accumulation of resources for mobilization (Goodwin and Jasper, 2014). Thus the resource mobilization theory explicitly focuses on formal organizational aspects of movements. Departing from earlier approaches, it views movements as rational, legitimate and embedded in stable networks. Significant here is the role of the leadership to the success of any movement, who is also entrepreneurial thus able to mobilised resources such as finances, moral support and networking. Social movements, thus, involve the rational pursuit of interests by competing groups along with the accumulation of resources, organisation and opportunities for collective action. Lastly, the success and effectiveness of the movement are understood in terms of material benefit or the actor being recognised as a political person.

### **1.5.4 Political Process**

As the term suggests, political process approach focus more on political movements rather than socio-religious, cultural movements. In addition, they looked at the political dimension of movements where the use of politics was seen as normal and extra-institutional means to collective action. As in the economic models of mobilization theories, protestors are viewed as normal people pursuing their legal interests as best they could

and not pathological (Goodwin and Jasper, 2014). By default, the approach lays stress on changes in state as the most significant opportunity in a movement.

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## **1.6 CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

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In the previous sections, conceptual and learning definitions of movements were discussed along with the approaches to study movements. Nature of social movements often overlaps and many movements undergo a transformation in the course of time. They are only one of the numerous forms of collective action. Social movements are also multi-dimensional, i.e. they can vary and overlap on the basis of the members' conscious commitment to change, presence of the minimal organization, and normative commitment and participation that guides it (Wilkinson, 1971). Thus a movement can contain characteristics of the class movement, of nationalism, and yet be sectarian. Religious movements frequently set out to transcend the narrow bases and constraints of class, sectional or national interest. Their ideologies, belief systems and patterns of normative commitment are therefore based on absolute, transcendental values of a religious or quasi-religious nature (Wilkinson, 1971). Thus, according to Wilkinson, creating typologies is a difficult process that needs to look into,

first, the complex subject of the origins and sources of different kinds of movement and of the social, economic and political conditions which constitute the most fertile soil for such movement; second, the analysis of varying patterns of movement ideology, leadership and organization; third, theories and models of movement development; finally, there is the theme of movement politicization (1971, p.52).

On this basis, he classifies movement into the following broad types – a) religious movement, millenarism and sect, b) movements of rural and

urban discontent, c) Nativist, nationalist and race movements, d) Imperialism and pan-movements, e) Class and occupational interest movements, f) Moral protest and reformist movements, g) Revolutionary, resistance and counter-revolutionary movements, , h)Intellectual movement, i) Youth movement and lastly, j) Women's movement.

Movements have thus been classified differently on the basis of distinctive criteria such as population to whom they appeal, or by whom they are supported. Marxist for instance, classify social movements in terms of their potential for revolutionary transformation in society. They characterise the movements in reference to the participants and leaders' ideology, as well as their immediate and long term objectives of the collective action against the political system. According to this, movements are of three types: revolt or rebellion, reform, and revolution. Revolt or rebellion are collective action against the political system or regime and may also make attempts to change in the authority/rulers without questioning or aim at changing the political system. The reformist movement aims at bringing certain changes in the system and without transforming the system completely. Instead, the focus is on questioning the functioning of political institutions and build pressure on the government to introduce certain changes in their structure and procedures. In a revolution, on the other hand, the goal is to launch an organised struggle to overthrow not only the established government and regime but also the socio-economic structure which sustains it and replace the structure by an alternative social order.

Chicago School, specifically Blumer (1946) gave three categories of movements a) general social movements, b) specific social movements, and c) expressive social movements. General movements are characterized by broad sweeping changes in the society typically in the value systems and perception of privileges and disabilities of people. While they lack specific organized networks, these movements are more widespread in nature. An example is that of women's movements, human rights movements etc.

Specific social movements, on the other hand, have defined goals and objectives with the recognized organizational framework, leadership and defined membership. Lastly, expressive social movements are those that result in the transformation of by and large the outlook of the participating individuals and on the nature of the social order. Religious movements are one such type of movements.

Neil Smelser's typology of movement is based on his collective behaviour theory. Distinctively sociological, his approach looks at collective behaviour and conventional behaviour as coherent aspects of reality by adopting those of structural-functionalist thought.

For Smelser, collective behaviour can be explained with variables of his value-added theory, i.e. conditions that are necessary for development of social movement - structural conduciveness (of structures that will permit collective behaviour such as spatial proximity), strain (as an impairment of relations that lead to inadequate functioning of society such as inequality), generalized belief (general understanding of the people), precipitating factors (such as political opportunity), mobilization, and social control (Morris and Herring, 1984). On the basis of his theory, social movements can be of two types, a) the norm-oriented movement where the action is mobilized in terms of a generalized belief involving reconstitution of norms, such as reform movements and b) the value-oriented movement where values are given the central position such as nationalist movements etc.

### **1.6.1 New Social Movements**

As mentioned before, since the 1960s, the study of social movement took a new turn with the rise of new forms of collective action especially in Western Europe and North America. Social movements such as could no longer be analysed in terms of the ideological and organizational orientations which were deterministic in nature in the new post-industrial

setup. These movements rather were essentially non-violent and non-coercive, non-integrated and non-hierarchical, and cut across class and ideology exhibit plural ideas and values. Non-violence and civil disobedience etc. are the dominant patterns of collective mobilisation where mobilisations are linked to issues of symbolic and cultural identities. Thus emphasising more on culture as the domain for struggle, new social movements are located more in the sphere of civil society. These social movements attempt to bring about change through changing values and developing alternative lifestyles. These social movements are concerned with cultural innovations and the creation of new lifestyles. Women's movements, queer rights movements, ecology movement are few examples of such type.

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### **1.7 SUMMING UP**

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Social movements have always been, and continue to be, one of the biggest forces of change in today's world. Movements have purposes, even when they have to do with transforming members themselves. There is no single theory or approach to study social movements. Despite the varying explanations, in this unit, we have introduced the concept of social movement and demonstrated the broader framework within which the concept can be understood.

Key Words: Social Movement, Collective action, Organisation, Mobilization.

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### **1.8 QUESTIONS**

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1. What are the characteristics of a social movement?
2. Describe the various approaches through which social movements can be understood?
3. Explain the broad typologies of social movements in society.

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## 1.9 RECOMMENDED READING AND REFERENCES

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## **UNIT 2: THE SOCIAL BASE: CLASS, CASTE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, ROLE AND TYPES OF LEADERSHIP; RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERS AND THE MASSES**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 The Social Bases of Social Movements
  - 2.3.1 Class
  - 2.3.2 Caste
  - 2.3.3 Ethnicity
  - 2.3.4 Gender
- 2.4 The Nature of Leadership
  - 2.4.1 Types of Leadership
  - 2.4.2 Social Composition of Leadership
  - 2.4.3 Leadership, Movement and Challenges of Mobilization
  - 2.4.4 Leadership in Strategy and Framing Process, and Movement Outcomes
- 2.5 Summing Up
- 2.6 Questions
- 2.7 Recommended Readings and References

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Social movements have been one of the major factors of social change in modern society. One of the reasons for this is that movements require mass participation. All social movements are characterised by mass participation, organizational framework, ideologies, and sustainable goals. In the previous unit, we briefly touched upon the characteristics of social movements. In this unit, we shall focus on one of the key elements of a

social movement: its social bases, i.e., the members and the leaders that determine the shape of a movement. We shall focus on the nature of social base in the context of class, caste, ethnicity and gender issues especially in case of social movements in India and then analyse the role of leaders in the sustenance of a social movement.

According to Johnston (2014), social movements are guided by three analytical spheres – ideational, performative, and structural. The ideational-interpretative sphere consists of values, interests, beliefs, motivations etc and the performative consists of a wide range of tactics such as marches, demonstrations, meetings, petitions, rallies, sit-ins, strikes. Both these spheres have a close relationship with the structural sphere which constitutes the relatively fixed network relations among the people and organizations who mobilize and integrate others into the movement. This also involves the presence of networks that connects the complexity of organization by binding all components together. Social bases of any movements constitute of people who identify with a particular movement and its goal. They represent the structural sphere which provides the ideational support and ultimately carry out the collective action. Scholars like Zald and Klandermans have called for an understanding of the role of ideology, particularly in shaping public opinion in explaining social movements. Social bases are thus critical for the success of any contemporary movement and in the ongoing era of globalization, it has become all the more important to acknowledge the new heterogeneous background of activists and their socialization into the movement phenomena. Each social base represents a category of people, who are perceived or perceive themselves to be the provider of support to the movement. Thus, the questions of who joins and supports the movement or how movements are organized involve looking into the social bases.

The study of social bases has been part of the study of social movements for a long time within the scope of concepts like organization, networks,

interest groups etc (Lipset, 1960; Tilly, 1998; Porta & Diani, 2006; Johnston, 2014). Lipset's (1960) comparative analysis of Western democracy highlights social bases as one of the fundamental conditions that can facilitate or impede the development of any democracy. In his analysis of collective action, Charles Tilly (1998) describes its components- interest, organization, mobilization, opportunity, and collective action. What overlaps them all is the population of interest, i.e., the people who will interact in collective action and Tilly here identify their basic elements as the following – a) government which is an organization which controls the principal concentrated means of coercion within the population, b) contender which is any group which, during some specified period, applies pooled resources to influence or challenge the government, c) polity which consists of the collective action of the members and the government, and d) coalition which is a tendency of a set of contenders and/ or governments to coordinate their collective action. This according to Tilly's political process theory reflects the interest group politics in society. Understanding and analysing social base requires looking into these various elements such as power and opportunity/threat to claims, within which politics operates in order to meet their goals. Further, the social location or the position of the bases also significantly determine their nature and characteristics. Recently, Manuel Castells (2015) looked into the 21st-century movements which are increasingly relying more and more on networks and the people, rather than institutional systems, political parties or even organizations. According to him, the ongoing transformation of communication technology in the digital age has extended the reach of communication media to all domains of social life in a network that has transformed the way movements function, thus making the actors involved more autonomous than before.

### Stop and Read

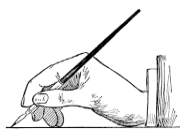
- **Collective Action:** Collective action is an organised social or political act by a group of people in order to fulfil their needs. According to Tilly (1977), it includes all the ways in which people join their efforts in pursuit of common ends specifically collective goods, i.e social products which, if provided to one member of a group, cannot easily be denied to other members of the group. First, collective action generally involves interaction with specific other groups, including governments. Second, collective action usually takes well-defined forms already familiar to the participants. Depending on the collective actors, it can manifest itself as competitive claims, reactive claims, or proactive claims (Tilly, 1998)
- **Ideology:** All social movements are guided by ideology or set of ideologies that bring together the social bases and promote collective action. The concept of ideology, however, has been criticised, as it merges two quite different aspects of culture: values and the interpretative tools such as habits, memories, prejudices, common wisdom, practical knowledge, etc "for those who mobilize most readily and intensely are not necessarily those with the strongest values but those whose interpretation of the situation provides a clear rationale for acting" (Porta and Diani, 2006)

Another important component of social movement is leadership. While movements can be decentralized where power is dispersed among members and organization, there is no denying that the presence of leadership can affect the nature and development of the goals and the recruitment and commitment of members. Leadership constitutes acceptance of responsibility and making decisions in order to create conditions that help to achieve goals. A good leader is not only responsible, and accountable but also adaptive and innovative in the face of an unpredictable future. While Weberian thought focused on the role of charismatic leadership in

the transformation of society, it is evident that the role of leadership goes beyond it. A leader is also expected to bring the community together and mobilize resources. How leaders are made or arise is specific to the context of each of the movement. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Malala Yousufzai, Martin Luther King Jr., and Dalai Lama have all represented different ideologies and emerged in a specific context. No matter what the values are, leadership is instrumental in pushing agendas and translating values to action.

In this unit, we shall learn about the nature of social bases in social movements in the context of the society in India. Thus, the focus will be on examples from the history of social movements in India and the social location of the people, i.e, class, caste, gender and ethnicity. In addition, we shall also examine in details the role of leadership in social movements and the various perspectives that have developed in sociological literature.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Define collective action.

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2. Why do social movements require leaders?

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3. Explain Charles Tilly's ideas on Collective Action.

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## **2.2 OBJECTIVES**

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In this unit, we revisit one of the important elements of a social movement- its organizational framework. This includes the members, the leaders, the intellectuals, the pressure and interest groups who identify with the ideology of the movement thus forming the social base. We will specifically examine the significance of this concept with the help of examples from social movements in India.

By the end of this unit, you are expected to:

- Describe the different social bases found in a social movement;
- Analyse the significance of social bases in the success and sustenance of a social movement;
- Explain the nature of leadership in social movements;
- Describe the various issues related to the function of leaders in social movements.

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## **2.3 THE SOCIAL BASES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

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Social movements have transformed and shaped the world we live in today. But the question is who joins and supports these movements? As already mentioned, the social bases of any movement include those who join and provide support. It is usually the marginal and alienated members of society who are seen as most likely to join social movements. However, it has also been argued by some thinkers that it is the ones who are insecure or dogmatic who join social movements. In the rational choice theory, public support came to be understood as a consequence of rational and often self-interested action, i.e. people will not join groups if they think they cannot gain the benefits that the groups pursue by participating. Another helpful explanation is the collective identity that motivates people to devote time to protest and be part of a larger group they think they can help (Jasper, 2014). Thus, social bases function on the basis of cognitive



beliefs, moral and emotional dimension as well, i.e., whom to extend public support to. Zald (2000) specifically talks about the population's consciousness of the political ideology of the movement and their compatibility to it as two issues that affect the workings of social bases. Apart from ideational compatibility, social networks, a forceful determinant of the social bases in today's movement is the education. In the following sections, we will briefly look at the four most critical forms of social bases in a social movement, especially in India.

### **2.3.1 Class**

The link between social class and social movements refers back to the Marxian thought where the formation of a class is linked to its mobilization, what Marx called 'class consciousness'. Classes are created by actors who define themselves in active opposition to another group, making it structural, organizational and ideological at the same time. The class structure is made up of diverse socio-economic positions with each group possessing different structural and organizational capacities for mobilizing as a class. These capacities can be affected by the fact they belong to different religious beliefs, ethnicity, race etc.

Class groups identifying with farmers' and workers' unions have been viewed as an important instrument for social change in India. Peasant movements have a historic significance of being a symbol of struggle since pre-colonial days. With the formation of All India Kisan Sabha, the demand for freedom from economic exploitation for peasants, workers and all other exploited classes, issue of degenerating land revenue, public credit system, and land ownership took a central role in the movement. In 1970s Punjab, farmers took an anti-urban and anti-state stance and demanded change in 'price and related issues' such as price procurement, remunerative prices, and prices for agricultural inputs, taxation, and non-repayment of loans. Textile Labour Association founded in 1918 and All India Trade Union Congress, 1920 were the earliest organisations to lead

workers' movement in India. Trade unions overtime has divided amongst themselves over affiliation with political parties especially Indian National Congress and Communist Party. Today, there are regional trade unions affiliated to their own political parties as well. However, struggles of the working class differences between those who identify as organised, unorganised and self-employed worker (Shah, 2014). Perhaps most relevant in today's context is the middle-class group. Studies have shown that role of the urban middle class in various movements- reform, students', nationalist, human rights, anti-corruption, linguistic regionalism, backward class, anti-reservation – have been immense with leadership mostly arising from this background. Chaudhuri (2017) critically acknowledges that the middle class, because of their emergence in colonial modernity have been able to claim political visibility the best.

### **2.3.2 Caste**

Caste identity in social movement has been widely researched in the case of Dalit and Backward Caste/Class movements in India (Shah, 2014). These movements are about social, political and subsequent economic oppression and exploitation of the community and stigmatisation over centuries and the struggle for self-determination and self-dignity. Because caste identity cuts across other sources of identity, one can see caste groups active in agrarian or workers' movement as well. Caste consciousness today has begun to take a more secular form and have thus become an effective tool for political mobilisation. The increasing visibility of both Dalits and other backwards classes has led to a feeling among sections of the upper caste that they are not given importance in their relative access to jobs, educational advantages, and political power. It has been argued that movements based on caste identity and consciousness is nothing but basically a response generated by the emerging capitalist mode of production and hence directed against repressive social and cultural practices (Shah, 2014).

### **2.3.3 Ethnicity**

Movements arising from ‘ethnic’ majorities have different dynamics from movements by ‘ethnic’ minorities or mixed-ethnic movements and assertion of ethnic boundaries have been tied to formations of modern nation-states, the definition of citizenship, and distribution of resources. This implies that ethnic (or other) groups created at the level of society as a whole, always involve relations of domination and subordination. Ethnic markers can be discrete markers of powers and privileges thus making them an important instrument of political mobilisation. National minorities, immigrant and refugee groups as the broad categories of ethnic groups have often been mobilised for the articulation of socio-economic and political interests. Ethnicity has been a common source of grouping in tribal movements and ethnic-nationalist movements in India most of which have manifested through linguistic and religious assertions. The struggles of Birsa Munda and the numerous tribal groups in central India over centuries who created a unified ethnic consciousness and a shared identity as Jharkhandis was politically realised with the formation of Jharkhand state in 2000. Today, we see that mobilisation along ethnic identity is for affirmative discrimination, for greater autonomy and unquestioned power, autonomy demand related to systematic change, and secession.

### **2.3.4 Gender**

The scope for women’s participation in movements has increased over the years due to the increase in feminist research, organizational mobility, political associations, etc. Women activists lead movements on human rights, environmental protection, sustainable economy, civil liberties across the globe. Feminist over the world has criticized the construction of patriotic manhood and exalted motherhood as icons of movements and the designation of gendered places for men and women in political mobilization. Gender identity has long been the source of cultural beliefs in social movements whether it is nationalist agendas, land rights and

ownership, or women-centric issues like that of sexual violence, reproductive health. dowry etc.

Social bases of any movement are, therefore, a complex of ideational sources from multiple identities. The intersectionality of identities makes social bases a multifaceted category and all social movement depends on the organizations and leadership involved to understand this complex nature of its social bases to have a successful outcome.

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## **2.4 THE NATURE AND ROLE OF LEADERSHIP**

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Once a social movement emerges, it is the leaders who strategize in order to ensure that people with similar viewpoints coalesce into same factions. While the study of social movements has progressed significantly, the theoretical study on leadership has been fairly limited. According to Morris and Staggenborg (2007) is likely due to the gap between the conceptualization of agency and structure in social movement studies. While the focus on agency manifested in leaders can sometimes overshadow the structural opportunities and hindrance to collective action, and emphasis on structure also runs the risk of neglecting the human agency.

Weber's theory of charismatic leadership is one of the classic perspectives on relational approach on leadership and social movement. Weber defines charisma "as a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (Wilkinson, 1971). He categorized leadership based on charismatic grounds as one of the three most important types of legitimate authority. Weber further elaborates the movement forms associated with charismatic leadership, including the emotional-affectual following of the charismatic leader and the appointment of officials based on loyalty to the

charismatic leader. In his study on religious development in world religions, he regarded prophet as an example of such charismatic authority, wherein he explained that charismatic leaders can bestow their followers and the social organizations they establish or sustain, with some of their charismatic power by association. Weber further applies this to his explanation of social change by suggesting that the assimilation of charismatically derived goals and norms into socio-religious and political institutions as part of broader social change. While the theory gives us a useful framework for analysing the problem of leader-follower relations in social movement, critiques have pointed out how the agency of the followers gets diminished in the long run.

Zald and Ash (1966) argued that while member's lack of concern, when it occurs, does allow leaders to transform the goals of members, but in some instances, leaders transform organizations in a radical rather than conservative direction. Thus, as mentioned, leaders would have to focus on mobilizing resources or even articulating ideas which demand a lot from them. Resource mobilization theorists, for instance, have looked at leaders as political entrepreneurs and masses as rational followers, where the former mobilize resource and respond according to opportunities and risks.

In conclusion, it can be said that the study of leadership and their role in social movements need to take into account its dynamic nature. Leaders operate within structures, and they can influence movement organization. They are found at different levels, performing varied roles. Leaders can be self-oriented at the expense of movement goals, but there are those who work to advance movement goals over their own interests (Morris and Staggenborg, 2002). In the following sections, we shall briefly look at some important issues that help in understanding the nature of leadership.

### **2.4.1 Types of Leadership**

While charismatic authority is one style, leadership can manifest in several forms. Kurt Lewin's typology consisted of three styles of leadership: a) autocratic, who would have tight control over the group and its activities and decisions made by the leader, b) democratic- where group participation and majority rule is important, and c) laissez-faire, where the leader provides little or no direction to the followers. While authoritarian leaders have a clear expectation of what is to be done and are decisive, the lack of space for creative input from others makes them controlling and dictatorial. Democratic leaders are known to encourage participation, delegate responsibilities, consensual and share information with members. However, this style can be time and resource consuming and is most effective only in the presence of highly skilled members. The laissez-faire style of leadership is very accommodative and flexible and allows for the growth of coalitions but it can also result in inactive and passive leadership that invites mistrust and withdrawal of group participation.

### **2.4.2 Social Composition of Leadership**

True to what Weber perceived, successful leaders have a certain extraordinary quality. However, studies have also shown that leaders are not randomly chosen from a group of people. The most common denominator is the upper or middle class and highly educated status and in addition, most leaders have been disproportionately male. This social composition of leaders seems to be the rule rather than the exception even in non-western societies.

First, the privileged background provides the leaders with financial resources while education capital (as one of the key factors that distinguish them from a mass followers) assist in formulating ideas, debating, interacting with media, orating, devising strategies and forming coalitions. These are the skills that enabled Gandhi, Luther King Jr., Lenin, Nehru, Ambedkar etc to develop strategies for direct action. This, however, does

not mean that all leaders have always come from such a privileged background nor that the leaders from that category have been the best suited to lead a movement. A new wave of activism has produced leadership from people of all class backgrounds and less privileged origins. Whether it be human rights, rural landless workers' rights, environmental, gender issues, people from diverse background are becoming more visible. Nevertheless, their asset also remained their access to education or the emphasis in continuing it whether it is through formal and institutionalized means or even hands-on experience.

Secondly, gender inequality in the top levels of leadership in social movements is another critical issue. Women have always participated widely in social movements, and have played crucial roles in the activities. It also needs to be understood that social movement leadership is a complex phenomenon with multiple layers, and vertical ordering. Women, however, mostly played secondary roles like that of an intermediate leader having the task of bringing in members. But Morris and Staggenborg (2007) cautioned against collapsing the definition of organizers who create strategies, frame issues, and shape the outcomes with organizers who canvas and raise funds or are simply spokespersons.

Third, is the issue of leaders who are from inside the challenging groups versus those who come from outside. Studies show that with inside/outside leaders there are advantages and disadvantages to the social movement. For instance, privileged outsiders often bring fresh viewpoints, social contacts, and skills. However, mixed leadership also tend to generate conflicts due to hostilities, disagreements about ideologies etc. In sum, the composition of social movement leadership matters because it affects access to leadership skills that are crucial to leadership success.

### **2.4.3. Leadership, Movement and Challenges of Mobilization**

The emergence of any movement depends a lot on how leadership interacts with other cultural and political factors. This involves the skill to identify and utilise opportunities when they present themselves. It is generally favourable for the movement when the leader is already aware of the structure within which the opportunities occur. For example, in the abortion rights movement, leaders emerged have from existing social movements that include the population and family planning movements as well as the women's movement. When it comes to mobilizing, especially at the early stages, skilled leadership will ensure that frames, tactics and organizational vehicles that allow participants to actively construct a collective identity and participate in collective action at various levels will be ready. In doing so, leaders rely not only on their personal attractiveness and abilities, but also on previous experiences, cultural traditions, gender norms, social networks, and familiar organizing forms.

### **2.4.4 Leadership in Strategy and Framing Process, and Movement Outcomes**

One of the central tasks of a leader is to build connections among leaders and movement organizations in order to access to a wider range of strategies and promote coordination between national and local strategies and coalition work. Framing is fundamental here as it helps to identify the adversaries and potential allies. Framing specifies the suitable strategies and procedure to achieve the numerous desired ends. Leaders as framers, therefore, must be skilled in using a variety of discourses and identifying a range of themes appropriate to different audiences. Effective leaders always appeal to heterogeneous supporters and enhance the agency of their supporters as well as their own. Gandhi, for instance, drew from masses of all social background regardless of caste, class, gender and religious beliefs.



In conclusion, it can be thus said that social movement leaders carry out a complex set of activities that are crucial to outcomes because, regardless of structural conditions, there exist a variety of choices to be made regarding these tasks. Today, in the digital age the media is a critical means through which movements recruit members, boost the morale of adherents, and convey their importance and messages to the public. Movement and media frames compete and often clash to make their frames last. It is the ability of leaders that is the key, therefore, to convey movement frames through the mass media.

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## **2.5 SUMMING UP**

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In this unit, we have covered the social bases of social movements, focusing basically on class, caste, ethnicity and gender. We have also explored the role of leadership in social movements and understood how the nature, type and social composition of leadership can determine the shape of a social movement.

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## **2.6 QUESTIONS**

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1. Discuss the different social bases found in a social movement with examples.
2. Define leadership and its nature, and the various types.
3. What are some of important elements in the relationship between leadership and social movement?

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## **2.7 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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## **MODULE II: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT**

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## **UNIT 3: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT: MARXIST AND POST-MARXIST**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Objectives

3.3 Evolution of Marxism

3.4. Features of Marxism

3.4.1. Dialectical Materialism

3.4.2. Historical Materialism

3.4.3. The Concept Of Surplus Value

3.4.4. The Concept Of Class Struggle

3.4.5. Religion-The Opium Of The People

3.4.6. The Establishment Of Communist Society

3.4.7. The Theory Of Revolution

3.5. Class Relations & Social Change

3.6. Post Marxism

3.6.1. New Social Movements And Post Marxism

3.7 Summing Up

3.8 Questions

3.9 Recommended Readings and References

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this unit, we shall be discussing important theories of sociology that are Marxism and Post-Marxism. In the first part of the unit, we shall discuss and comprehend the basic definitions of Marxism, the evolution of Marxism and the various characteristics & philosophy of Marxism.

Marxism developed as a theory that was crafted for social movements. The popular movements in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam and many areas of the world till date have witnessed, in one form or the other, the application of the Marxist theory. These interventions led to contribution and further development of the theory.

The term Marxism is used in a number of different ways. In its most essential meaning, it refers to the thought of Karl Marx sometimes extended to include that of his friend and collaborator Friedrich Engels. Movements which bear a class character followed the principles of Marxism and several Movements tried to follow the ideological praxis. Lenin and Trotsky are two important people who worked out the 'Soviet Marxism' and which was modified by Stalin under the name of 'Marxism-Leninism'. This became the doctrine of the communist parties set up after the Russian Revolution in newly liberated countries like Cuba. An offshoot of this is Marxism as interpreted by the anti-Stalinist Leon Trotsky and his followers which followed in the period post the rise of Stalin. There is Mao-Tse Tung's Chinese variant of Marxism-Leninism as well.

#### **Stop and Read**

##### **Definitions:**

The term "Marxism" is the most complex one when it comes to meaning. This is mainly because there are many theories associated with it and it has also been interpreted by many thinkers. Similarly, after the death of Karl Marx, this philosophy has been developed by

Vladimir Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, Kosygin, Li-Tao-Chou, Mao-Tse-Tung etc. Thus, it can be said that the different social, political, economic conditions that prevailed at different times gradually took shape into the concepts of Marxism. Some of the common definitions are:

- The system of thought developed by Karl Marx, his co-worker Friedrich Engels and their followers. (The Webster's New World TM College Dictionary: 2005,883)
- Marxism is the highest development of humanism, it is the form in which the age-long contradiction between human advance and human subjection is resolved, it is the last rebellion of the oppressed and the only one in which success is possible. It takes its origin from the rebellion of man against inhumane conditions and its single aim is the recovery of man's lost humanity. This is the very essence of humanism and Marxism is humanism in its contemporary form. (John Lewis:1976, 152)
- Marxism is a dialectical theory of human progress. It regards history as the development of man's effort to master the forces of nature and, hence, of production ("economic interpretation of history"). Since all production is carried out within social organization, history in the succession of changes in social systems, the development of human relation geared to productive activity ("modes of production"), in which the economic system forms the base and all other relationships, income, institutions and idea systems are superstructural" (The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences: 1968,40-4)

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### 3.2 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit, we will deal with the idea of Marxism and the principles associated with it. We will also get to know the ideas that made Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels frame a new kind of theory. This unit further explores the theory of post-Marxism which emerged after the death of Karl Marx. By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Define Marxism and explain the Marxist theory;
- Explain the principles of Marxism and social change;
- Analyse post-Marxist ideas in social movements.

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### 3.3 EVOLUTION OF MARXISM

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The 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of the Industrial Revolution in England and saw it spreading like a wildfire all over Europe and later in the Colonies. With this, a new social and economic system was created in human history and it is that of ‘capitalism’. Marx discusses history as a history of class struggle that led to social change and a new system. “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”, a statement by Marx (1983) in *The Communist Manifesto* well defines his view on History. The change focuses on the belief that class antagonism would eventually polarize the society into two rival camps between the *Bourgeoisie*, the owner class and the *Proletariat*, the worker class. The owner class or the capitalist class is the group of people with wealth, power and property who are responsible for exploiting the workers. This continued for quite some time and later on, philosophers and thinkers began questioning the injustice done on the working class. One such philosopher and thinker was Karl Marx who belonged to Germany. He changed the course of the conflict between the capitalists and the workers by writing the processes of revolution and ways to overcome the exploitation of Bourgeoisie by establishing a Proletariat State.

The political and economic theories of the German philosopher Karl Marx can be termed as Marxism. It deals with the complete abolition of private



ownership of the means of production as well as commodities with the provision of work and subsistence to all. It is, in fact, a social, economic and political ideology with having found its expression through the works of Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels. The students of Marxism have always been intrigued by his analysis of capitalism, class theories, labour theories, materialism, interpretation of history, thoughts on revolution etc. The term “Marxism” derived its name from Karl Marx itself and to an extent, it is a doctrine grown and nourished by Karl Marx himself and assisted by Friedrich Engels. But from time to time different philosopher and thinkers have interpreted the term in a variety of ways. Comprehension of Marxism, thus, needs thorough study.

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### **3.4 PRINCIPLES/FEATURES OF MARXISM**

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#### **3.4.1. Dialectical Materialism**

Dialectical materialism is a fundamental philosophy of Marxism. It is called dialectical because of its approach to the phenomena of nature. The Chinese and the Greeks saw everything as a fluid that changes constantly, come into being and passes away (<https://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/d/i.htm>). Its method of studying and apprehending is dialectic while its interpretation of the phenomenon is materialistic. (1938: Dialectical and Historical Materialism - Marxists Internet Archive)

When mentioning their dialectical method Marx and Engels usually refer to the German philosopher Hegel, who formulated the main features of dialectics. However, Hegelian dialectics is associated with the realm of ideas, emphasising that ideas govern the whole society. Marx, on the other hand, focused on the materialistic aspect, which according to him, governs every other aspect of society. Thus, Marx came up with his concept of dialectical materialism.

The concept of dialectical materialism represents the opposite forces which are always there from the moving forces of history. Marx had his own

concept of evolution which operates on the basis of economic forces. He took the idea of Hegel who had the notion that history is the struggle between the opposites. Each historical age is dominated by an idea of a certain type called the “thesis” which will have within itself exactly contradictory ideas called “antithesis”, and antithesis working against thesis would produce syntheses which form the predominant idea of the new age.

### **3.4.2. Historical Materialism**

The concept of Dialectical materialism was used by Marx to interpret history. Marx has this view that the survival of man lends on his ability to produce materialistic things and so production becomes the most important activity of all human activities. The whole concept of society comes mainly because of economic production. The main reason behind this is that man in a society is always able to produce more than a man in isolation. Before people could politicize, play politics, create an art etc. they must produce their economic necessities. To do this they need to enter into a social relation. The key factor of this relationship is a material requirement. Using this as a starting point, history came to be classified based on material circumstances like the slave mode of production, the feudal mode of production, the capitalist mode of production and so on.

From the mentioned stages of historical development, we can be sure that in each case we have a factor that owns the means of production and controls it, rules over the weaker ones and causes conflict and terrors.

### **3.4.3. The Concept of Surplus Value**

Marx says that in a capitalist system of production the working class faces exploitations. He gives a theory of surplus value and tells how actually the exploitations take place. Marx says that there are four units of production; land, labour, capital and resources. Out of the four units, only labour remains variable. Moreover, it is the only factor that which is the sole creator of the value of the commodity. Therefore for Marx, the value of a

commodity is dependent on the quantity of labour force used in the production of that commodity. If labour can produce more than what is required by working at an average of thirty hours a week to support his family, then he does not produce any surplus value.

#### **3.4.4. The Concept of Class Struggle**

This is the most popular ideology of Marxism. The book *Communist Manifesto* itself tells that the history of all existing society is the history of class struggle. This concept of Class struggle or Class war comes for all his other principles like dialectical materialism, historical materialism and the concept of surplus value. Every society usually has two classes having the feeling of hatred against each other. And this is dependent on the productive forces of society.

#### **3.4.5. Religion-the Opium of the People**

Marx considered religion to work as opium in the minds of the people. Marx himself displayed the courage to talk against religion in society when the religion was gripping the society and causing harm to them. He profoundly writes that the capitalists use religion to hide their exploitation and which makes the working class accept subjugation. Religion has been created by society itself and Marx looks down on it as a tool for injustice and disorder.

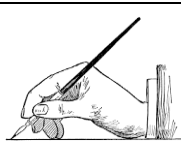
#### **3.4.6. The Establishment of Communist Society**

Marx aims for a classless and stateless society. He aims for a society where every man shares equal right. Men will no more be treated as tools for profit accumulation. There will be no private property and everything will be distributed and shared among the people. This type of society, according to Marx, is the ideal kind of society for a man to live his life and enjoy his freedom.

### 3.4.7. The Theory of Revolution

Marx is of the opinion that revolution in society is unavoidable. Usually, the capitalist class or the owners of the means of production do not allow any historical force to have its course. So in times like this, it becomes necessary to fight against the capitalists. This happens gradually and after the realization of 'class consciousness', it finally leads to an unavoidable revolution that changes the whole scene and makes oppressed class establish their rule.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. What is dialectical materialism?

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2. How does Marx look at religion?

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3. How does Marx give a materialistic interpretation of history?

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### 3.5 CLASS RELATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

According to Marx, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the

common ruin of the contending classes.” (Marx and Engels, 1952). Class formation and social classes are the significant agents of social change and this change is based on class conflict. In the stages of transformation of society, there have been changes due to class struggles.

In the modern capitalist society, new classes are formed prominently which will be later the classes for and of polarisation in the class struggle. They are the bourgeoisie (the owners of the Modes of production i.e., the ‘haves’) and the proletariat (i.e. the ‘have-nots’).

According to Marx, under capitalism, it is imminent that pauperisation of the *Proletariat* will take place. The basic ethos of Capitalism is for having the conditions of formation of capital and augmentation of it which is the significance for the sway of the *Bourgeoisie*. To Marx “All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interests of the immense majority.” (Marx and Engels, 1952).

Classes, to Marx, are formed based on objective material conditions that are owned in the immediate location of the individual. Simplifying this we can say that class is defined by the relation to the mode of production, ownership of property. This sense of power due to ownership excludes others from the property that leads to the realization of the social class of the workers. This is known as class consciousness. The material conditions of a class form the basis for the formation of ‘class-in-itself which get transformed in ‘class-for-itself’ in the process of traversing of subjective class consciousness. The antagonism due to economic interest leads to a conflicting and contradictory position of the polarized class. The *proletariat* calls for hostile action against the

*Bourgeoisie* with the intermediation of class consciousness leading to conflict.

The conflict will lead to a new socio-economic system known as Socialism. The Britannica defines socialism as a social and economic doctrine that calls for public rather than private ownership of property or resources. Karl Marx and Engels put forward exactly this point in the *Manifesto* when they proclaimed that in a socialist society “the condition for the free development of each is the free development of all.” This is another transition phase makes the society ready to move towards the ideal egalitarian society that is free from social status and social classes. The stage is known as Communism. In this particular stage, the powers would be disseminated to the people and free from any political boundary. The society would be producing only on the basis of needs and elements of profit based on surplus value would be over.

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### **3.6. POST-MARXISM**

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The theories on Marxism that are part of the neo-Marxist paradigm is that of Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault. The theoretical viewpoint known as Post-Structuralist Marxism is an elaborate work of the former. Post-Marxism deals and emphasizes the sexual, racial, class and ethnic divisions of the Western society. In the Post Marxism paradigm the works such as the economic theory of Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff, the historical methodology of Michel Foucault, the political theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the feminist theory of Judith Butler, the materialist philosophy of Pierre Macherey, and the cultural studies of Tony Bennett and John Frow. Philips Goldstein tries to explain how all these above mentioned are post-Marxist and outlines the history of Marxist philosophical or theoretical views (Goldstein, 2005).

Post-Marxism has important contributions in the ‘linguistic turn’ worked on non-economic motivations, the fluidity of social contexts, power of

language, and the construction of social movements and cultural trends. Deconstruction meant critical engagements by which the elements were re-appropriated in changed frameworks by breaking the wholes. The dogmatic Marxist assertion on laws of motion of history was dismissed and an emphasis on unknowability.

### **3.6.1 New Social Movement and Post Marxism**

The term "post-Marxism" is used to celebrate the works by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, Alain Badiou, Antonio Negri, Slavoj Žižek, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Rancière and Étienne Balibar and so on. These emerged in the late 1970s, associated with theorists such as Lyotard, Foucault, the Argentine political theorist Ernesto Laclau, the Belgian political theorist Chantal Mouffe, and Stuart Hall.

Post-Marxism emerged as an alternative political social theory to Marxism. This philosophical trend deconstructed Karl Marx's writings and Marxism proper and has provided a fresh new interpretation to understand social reality by bypassing the conventional trend of Marxism. The term post-Marxism has first appeared in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's theoretical work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985).

Theoretically, post-Marxism, as a trend of thought has radically altered how Marxism and Marxists have interpreted social reality and social world. It questions the hypothesis of economic determinism and thereby has added new dimensions to explicate and analyse social occurrence and phenomenon social reality thereof. It does not see economy as a foundation of politics and the state as an instrument that functions unambiguously and autonomously on behalf of the interests of a given few. The new movements instead of pushing for specific changes in public policy emphasize social changes in identity, lifestyle and culture. Thus the social aspect is seen by the New Social Movement as more important than the economic or political aspects. Such movements depart significantly from

the conventional social movement rise of the post-industrial economy has been the reason of a new wave of social movement and that such movements are ideologically and structurally different from the previous social movements occurred during the industrial era new movements focus not on issues of materialistic qualities such as economic wellbeing, but on issues related to human rights (such as gay rights or pacifism). Numerous social movements from mid-1960s differed from their precursors, such as the labour movement, which had previously been seen as focused on economic concerns. The new social movements have been paradoxical to traditional Marxism. Most importantly, Marxist categories of social class have not been able to map the frontiers of social conflict nor the social composition of the movement's nor have the movement's goals been framed in terms of benefits for specific social classes. Although these movements have vigorously opposed many of the same forces of power, property, and privilege as the old labour and socialist movements, the form of their opposition has differed in almost every respect.

The development of radical re-workings of Marxism reaction to classical Marxist materialism, historical determinism, anti-humanism, and class reductionism and influenced by post-structuralism and postmodernism, notably in the rejection of grand narratives. From the 1980s, post-Marxism was increasingly inflected by such cross-currents as feminism and post-colonialism. It is an anti-essentialist approach in which class, society, and history are no longer treated as unitary, universal, pre-discursive categories. Multiple subject positions are constituted dynamically in discourse in relation to class, gender, race, and nationality. Consequently, there is no uniform class consciousness. Hegemony, Ideology and culture are seen as relatively autonomous of the economic base. According to oxford dictionary, post-Marxism is sometimes loosely referred to an abandonment of Marxism particularly after the collapse of Soviet communism in Eastern Europe in 1989–91.



### **Stop and Read**

**Proletariat:** The proletariat is the class of wage-earners in an economic society whose only possession of significant material value is their labour-power. A member of such a class is a proletarian. In Marxist theory, a dictatorship of the proletariat is for the proletariat, of the proletariat, and by the proletariat.

**Industrial revolution:** During the early 19th century, the European countries saw the emergence of many industries that helped them with great economic developments. For the raw materials of these industries, these powers went to colonize Asian and African countries.

**Red Scare:** As the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States intensified in the late 1940s and early 1950s, hysteria over the perceived threat posed by Communists in the U.S. became known as the Red Scare.

**Russian Revolution:** The revolution that ousted the rule of the autocratic czar from Russia and advocated with the ideas of communism.

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### **3.7 SUMMING UP**

In this unit, we explored the evolution of Marxism, features of Marxism, class relations and social change, post-Marxism and New Social Movements. We studied how the theories of Marxism and post-Marxism provide the base for the various movements that took place in the 19th century and the 20th Century.

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### 3.8 QUESTIONS

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1. What is Marxism? How did it develop the theory of social change?
2. Discuss the various movements that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century which used Marxism as ideological base.
3. Explain the evolution of Post-Marxism and the differences between Marxism and Post-Marxism.
4. Elucidate the tenets of Marxism and Post-Marxism.

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## **UNIT 4: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT: WEBERIAN AND POST WEBERIAN**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Weber Revolution and Political Leadership
  - 4.3.1 Revolution
  - 4.3.2 Political Leadership
- 4.4 Charismatic Authority and Leadership
  - 4.4.1 The Concept of Charisma
  - 4.4.2 Charismatic Authority and Leadership
  - 4.4.3 The Charismatic Community
  - 4.4.4 The Routinization of Charismatic Authority
- 4.5 Post- Weberian Approach
- 4.6 Summing Up
- 4.7 Questions
- 4.8 Recommended Readings and References

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### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In the previous units, we defined a social movement as a deliberate form of collective action and behaviour that promotes social change and has some degree of organization framework with an ideational foundation. We also explained the different types of social movements and the approaches that have emerged to explain them. One of the important perspectives on social movement is that of Max Weber and the Weberian school of thought that he influenced. In this unit, we shall learn in detail on the concept of authority, leadership, charismatic authority, masses and their role in protests as explained by Weber. Weber's contribution to the understanding of social movement was largely in the field of religious change and development. While he also wrote a few commentaries on the Russian

Revolution, it was mostly a study on historical events (Scaff, 1996; Collins, 2001). Nevertheless one can see his arguments on the transition of the Russian society based within the framework of his ideas on class, status, and party and power relations.

As stated, the Weberian hermeneutic sociology has been primarily utilised for the purpose of understanding religious movement. Before we look into the details, we first need to identify the points that will help us separate a religious movement from other forms. Wilkinson (1974) in his typological review of social movements identifies key concepts, themes and theories which have direct relevance to theories of religious movement development, leadership, organization and politicization. According to him, firstly, all religious movements are motivated by a doctrinal authority which has the capacity to reorient individual personality. The source of this doctrinal authority can be abstract principles, supernatural beliefs or the personification of the power, or even a political leader. Secondly, the follower feels compelled, 'as a duty' as Weber put it, to believe and to act in accord with their religion. In the religious movement, the individual convert, thus, is expected to powerful moral pressures to alter their behaviour, and lifestyle, in accordance with the doctrine and the normative principles. Third, an important feature of religion is its claim to primacy and to authority to an ideological truth. The fourth is religion's power of promoting social integration and solidarity as argued by Durkheim. Religion and religious movements have usually helped in the reinforcement and conservation of social cohesion and order. Unlike Marx, the other classic pioneering sociologists- Weber, Durkheim and Troeltsch- recognized the complex link between religious ideology and social change. Troeltsch (1931) in his work on Christianity argued that the religion of the early Church was a religious movement. While he cites several socio-political reasons for the transformation of religious experience, like Weber, Troeltsch also asserts that religious conditions are not simply reflections of social conditions (in this case, 'class') but have their own internal dynamics

and direction of development. Wilkinson (1974) in this regard, emphasises on the concept of charisma as a foundation to construct a general theory of social movements. We will discuss this concept more in details later in the unit.

Weberian sociology cannot be fully understood without taking into account the concepts of rationalization. Rationalization is replacement of (religious) traditions, and values as a moral force for behaviour in society with concepts based on rationality and logic. In the understanding of religious movements, rationalization is used to explain how religious systems developed through stages of increasing rationality such clarification of ideas, greater complexity of doctrine etc. In his book, *Sociology of Religion* (1965), Weber elaborates on the rationalization process of religions development and states that there are a number of 'directions' and 'paths of development' which can lead to a 'breakthrough' from the primitive religious state thus making “rationality” a both historical and social phenomenon. He famously explained the process in his classic *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, in which he demonstrates how the Calvinism theology has shifted towards rational means of accumulating profit as a way of dealing with their anxiety over the uncertainty of attaining salvation. The consequence of this process according to Weber is that this form of rationalization would soon outgrow the religious doctrines and move into other institution. Thus, Weber utilises this similar analogy in his studies on bureaucracy and particular on the classifications of authority which we shall discuss in the following sections.

**Stop and Read:**

**SOME IMPORTANT POINTS ON RATIONALITY BY MAX WEBER**

- The concept of rationality has been developed in relation to Weber's fourfold typology of social action- affectual, traditional, value-

rational, and means-end rational action, in that he utilises the concept to analyse regularities and pattern of social actions. These patterns could occur at a plurality of levels of socio-cultural processes, in dominant civilizations to historical developments or short-term societal movements.

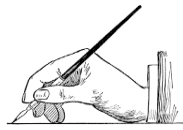
-According to Weber, there are four types of rationality: practical, theoretical, substantive, and formal. Weber designates every way of life that views and judges worldly activity in relation to the individual's purely pragmatic and egoistic interests as Practical rationality.

-Theoretical rationality involves a conscious mastery of reality through the construction of increasingly precise abstract concepts rather than through action. All abstract cognitive processes, in all their expansive active forms, denote theoretical rationality. Substantive rationality directly orders action into patterns in relation to a past, present, or potential "value postulate".

-Formal rationality generally relates to spheres of life and a structure of domination that acquired specific and delineated boundaries only with industrialization most significantly in the economic, legal, and scientific spheres, and the bureaucratic form of domination. It legitimates a similar means-end rational calculation by reference back to universally applied rules, laws, or regulation.

(Source: Kalberg, S. (1980). Max Weber's Types of Rationality: Cornerstones for the Analysis of Rationalization Processes in History. *American Journal of Sociology*, 85(5) )

## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Define rationalisation.

2. Give two features of a religious movement that make it distinct from other movements.

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### 4.2 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we will cover the important themes of Weberian sociology and the concepts of charisma and authority. We will also revisit the concept of leadership and masses from Unit 2. We will discuss Weber's perception of revolution and political leadership and its relationship to charismatic leadership. Finally, we will also explain the process of routinization of charisma and the post-Weberian critique on Weber's ideas.

By the end of this Unit, you are expected to:

- Explain Weber's interpretation of revolution and its relation to interest groups;
- Elaborate on the relevance of charismatic authority and community;
- Discuss the complexities of routinization of charisma;
- Distinguish between Weberian and Post-Weberian notions of rationality.



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### **4.3 WEBER ON REVOLUTION AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

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As mentioned previously one of the overarching thematic elements in Weber's sociology is that of rationalization and its effects on the changes that occur in social institutions-religion, political systems, democracy, civil society etc. This concept of rationalization is important in Weberian thought because it can facilitate or impede changes from one structure to another. The concept is mentioned here because it is a crucial factor in understanding Weber's conceptualization of revolution and political leadership. While Weber never wrote his chapter on 'revolution' in his work *Economy and Society*, he did publish, as mentioned earlier, his historical studies on Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

#### **4.3.1 Revolution**

Although revolution and social movements are related, they do not mean the same thing. They are very different in nature, scope and impact. However, there are revolutionary social movements which specifically seek to overthrow a state or a government (Goodman and Jasper, 2014). Weber never wrote a theory on revolution, hence most of his ideas on revolution draw from his work on charisma and rationality. Weber, in fact, terms 'charisma' as revolutionary for it breaks from other forms of traditional and legal- bureaucratic forms of rationality and brings about transformation in values. However, he speaks of both 'traditionalist revolution' and the 'revolutionary force' of bureaucratic rationalization (Swatos, 1981). A traditionalist revolution, according to him, is directed against the master or his servant personally, the accusation being that he failed to observe the traditional limits of his power," rather than being directed against "the system as such" (Swatos, 1981). The bureaucratic revolution is designed to impose a new system of action that will alter the mode of production and the nature of the social organization. In his analysis of revolution,

especially in his writings on the Russian revolutions, Weber goes beyond Marx's class interests by incorporating the governmental structures favoured by various interests. He also examines the strength of the different factions and interest groups and makes an estimate of whose interests are likely to gain the most (Collins, 2001).

Interest groups as defined by Weber corresponds to his ideas on class, status, and party. According to Weber both economic classes and status groups had interests pro or con the political status quo in Russia in 1905 and 1916. He listed the manufacturers, the big landowners, workers, peasants, and the petit bourgeoisie as part of the economic class. Among status groups, key divisions are among the monarchy and its social circles, the aristocracy- liberal and conservative faction, the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy, and the peasantry. These, along with all the nationalities of the Russian empire, all were politically mobilized. In addition, Weber also identified the intelligentsia, the educated strata and especially those who work in the world of education, journalism as both altruistic and idealistic in one respect, and opportunistic in another. What is crucial is to understand here is that Weber did not see the interest groups as merely pre-existent, based on location in the occupational and organizational structure but also as emergent as the process of mobilization takes place (Collins, 2001). This is what is termed as the process of activating Social Movement Organizations (SMOs), where tactics, strategies and all other paths of action is framed. According to Collins (2001), Weber's work also provided materials on the revolutionary crisis, i.e., who will ally with whom and form coalitions thus establishing which coalition will be the victor.

#### **4.3.2 Political Leadership**

Politics is according to Weber, is neither an ethical nor an exact science: it involves dangerous means and demands both calculation and risk. It is, thus, the duty of a political leader to neither live in passive acceptance of 'disenchantment' nor flee from reality, but rather to strive

both for political success. This form of ambitious leadership can only be attained through the compromise of two opposing political ethics: an ethic of responsibility, *Verantwortungsethik* and an ethic of conviction, *Gesinnungsethik*, the unison of which can be a person who have the “calling for politics” which he addresses in Politics as a Vocation (Gane, 1997). The leader may have to compromise depending on the values and historical conditions thus requiring a constant reassessment. Weber, was thus, convinced that responsible political leadership is about not sticking to absolute morals or ideals, rather seek a practical balance.

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#### **4.4 ON CHARISMATIC AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP**

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Weber's discussion of ‘charisma’ is central to his general project of studying the social effects of different types of norms. As an ideal type, charisma represents quality as well as a source for a certain type of authority. Weber regarded the three forms of authority - traditional, rational and charismatic - as ideal types. Traditional authority was based on 'what actually, allegedly, or presumably has always existed'. Rational authority was 'bound to intellectually analysable rules' while charismatic authority was dependent on the belief by the governed 'in the extraordinary quality of the specific person' (Wilkinson, 1974). We have learnt briefly about the role of charisma in defining leadership. However, because it gives a useful framework for analysing the problem of leader-follower relations in social movement, in this section we shall discuss in details Weber’s interpretation of the concept of charisma and how it is tied to nature of leadership.

##### **4.4.1 The Concept of Charisma**

Max Weber derived the concept of charisma from the work of Rudolf Sohm, who pioneered it in his study of the early Christian Church (Wilkinson, 1974). Unlike Weber, Sohm used the term in strictly religious usage of the term denoting a gift of spiritual endowment by an individual

derived from divine or supernatural sources. Weber held that, for example, military leaders, politicians, warriors, prophets etc could possess charismatic qualities as well as religious leaders or prophets. He defined charisma as a certain quality of an individual personality, by which the person 'is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities' (Wilkinson, 1974).

As one of the important types of legitimation of authority, charisma is fundamentally social. It is dependent upon a shared belief on the part of both person and the followers in the authenticity of the leader's charismatic possession. Furthermore, the development of charisma, according to Weber, is founded on "extraordinary" social circumstances. In its strongest form, charisma disrupts rational rule as well as tradition altogether and overturns all notions of sanctity. Such charismatic influence as manifests itself as a revolutionary power on the followers from within causing them to change their attitudes. Thus, actual authentic charisma is revolutionary in nature and short-lived existing only briefly before being transformed into a more stable form.

#### **4.4.2 Charismatic Authority and Leadership**

Because, it is "foreign to all rules", Weber sees charismatic authority in its pure form as having "a character specifically foreign to everyday routine structures" (Weber, Roth and Wittich 1978). Unlike traditional authority whether patriarchal or patrimonial which Weber regards as everyday forms of domination, the social relationships directly involved in charismatic ones are personal, based on the validity and practice of charismatic personal qualities' (*ibid.*, p.246). Thus, Weber sees charismatic authority as a rejection of the past, thus making it 'a specifically revolutionary force' (*ibid.*, p.244). Wilkinson (1974) points out that because charismatic authority, in contrast to bureaucracy, does not have orderly structures on the appointment, management, dismissal or any other formal agency, the

successful attainment of the mission of the leader is ultimately decided on the compliance of the followers. As a pure type, it is inherently opposed to rational economic conduct and ordered economy and is not primarily interested in monetary gain. Finally, the charismatic community, in order to perform their tasks, encourage asceticism by avoiding worldly ties, routine employment and family responsibilities.

Weber regarded the prophet as a type of charismatic leader. However, Weber argues that in order to be recognised as a genuine prophet, the leader must be able to question and defy the established normative order. Furthermore, they should proclaim a break in that order. Second, those subject to the authority must recognize in order to validate the charisma regardless of whether the prophet themselves regard their legitimacy as being dependent on such recognition or not. This is recognition, according to Weber, is supported by what is held as a sign or proof of such extraordinary quality. Despite the religious context, Weber clearly states that prophets are a separate category from priests. Priests claim authority by virtue of their service in a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma, i.e. by the direct and personal character of their call and of the doctrines and commandments they derive from their revelations. Hence, Weber (1978) claims, 'It is no accident that almost no prophets have emerged from the priestly class. A charismatic leader or prophet thus is 'a purely individual bearer of charisma', who by virtue of their mission 'proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment' (ibid., p.439). He, thus, distinguish between charismatic leaders who are exemplary prophets, like the Buddha, 'who, by his personal example, demonstrates to others the way to religious salvation' and those who are ethical prophets, like Prophet Muhammad, who appear as 'an instrument for the proclamation of a god and his will' and demand 'obedience as an ethical duty' (Weber, Gerth, Mills, 1967).

#### **4.4.3 The Charismatic Community**

Weber defines the charismatic community (*Gemeinde*) as an 'organized group subject to charismatic authority' (Weber, Roth and Wittich, 1978). The religious congregation is an example of one such form of collectivities that is a consequence of a specific model of the organization resulting from acts of charismatic individuals. This community of followers is based on an emotional form of communal relationship (*Vergemeinschaftung*) characterised by a minimal or absence of hierarchy and established administrative organs, thereby leading to non-delineated spheres of authority and, of any form of training or career structure (ibid.). In their place are agents who have been provided with charismatic authority by their chief or who possess the charisma of their own. Because there is no system of formal rules or legal principles, there is also no process of rational judicial decisions. Any formal, concrete judgements are creatively decided from case to case which is regarded initially as divine judgements and revelations.

#### **4.4.4 The Routinization of Charismatic Authority**

A community or congregation grows alongside what Weber calls the routinization of charisma. While it is possible for a charismatic person to lose his or her charisma, because of its transient nature, the practice of charismatic authority takes on the character of a permanent relationship with a 'community' of disciples or followers. This happens when it becomes either traditionalized or rationalized or a combination of both. According to Weber, there comes a point when the charismatic leader's mission 'comes to an end' and 'hope expects and searches for a new bearer' (Wilkinson, 1974). Routinization is ideally sought when the members of the community want to understand the detailed arrangements concerning both positions of authority and the economic situation as these relate to them (ibid.). Second, they need to have a sense of order in the organisation. Eventually, the 'laity' becomes differentiated from the 'clergy' as the charismatic movement

begins to have provisions for financial structures, thus routinizing the administrative roles.

Weber offers a few ways of selecting a successor. The first way is by searching for a new charismatic leader based on similar extraordinary qualities as the previous leader. Secondly, this can also occur through revelation in oracles, judgements etc. Third, the original charismatic leader may also designate a new leader who will be recognised as such by the followers. Fourth, similar to this, the new leader may also be selected by the charismatically qualified administrative staff or the original followers of the charismatic leader. Lastly, the succession can take place if the community believes that charisma may be passed on by ritual means from one person to another or may be created in a new person (Wilkinson, 1974). Whether the routinization is hereditary, democratic, or the "charisma of office", eventually it mixes with either traditional or rational-legal structures. It is thus possible for "charismatic" figures to exist within traditional or rational-legal systems in varying degrees, because pure type systems, for Weber, are methodological constructs rather than empirical realities. Along with the leadership, routinization also involves that the charismatic beliefs, doctrines and symbols tend to become more and more firmly assimilated, especially in the religious and political institutions of society. This is crucial in the development of organizational structures because the 'routinization' at the level of ideology or values imply the increase in processes of rationalization and standardization.

The process of the routinization of charisma is not a simple process. Weber points out that the "charismatic" figure in such routinized settings must be distinguished from the "genuine" charismatic leader and their revolutionary nature. He uses the concept of pseudo-charisma to distinguish between the two forms (Swatos, 1981) and very prophetically Weber acknowledged that bureaucratic structures in a

modern democratic society might have to use "mass effects" and the "charisma of rhetoric" to create "charismatic hero worship" in order to build the emotional support necessary for the maintenance of power. Thus, as a manufactured quality, pseudo-charisma is not an incorporation of charismatic elements into a more structured everyday form, but the calculated rational construction of superficial charismatic "signals" to maintain everyday forms. In contradiction, pseudo-charisma may use revolutionary signals, rhetoric, and effects to prevent genuine revolution (Swatos, 1981). The difference, then, is between charismatic figures or elements in non-charismatic authority structures and the charismatic type of domination per se.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. Explain Weber's understanding of political leader.

2. What is pseudo-charisma?

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#### 4.5 POST-WEBERIAN APPROACH

A post-Weberian approach to the understanding of movement is a review on Weber's work on both rationalization-disenchantment and charisma which includes both the negation of his views as well as an addition to them. S.N Eisenstadt (1968), who was influenced by Weber, contends that Weber's greatness lies in the way he 'combined historical and sociological analysis' Lindholm (1990) claims Weber wanted to



'conquer the world for rationality, removing all mystery from existence', and Goldman believes Weber saw rationalisation as threatening to 'impose itself totally on self and society, depriving them of the capacity to posit anything but their own submission'. Stark (1969) has argued that organization and charisma, priest and prophet in the early Catholic Church, were coexistent and interdependent right from the earliest stages. He posits that Weber's dichotomy is entirely misleading, especially when applied to a church such as the Catholic Church which although of ancient origin still attempts to preserve that collectivism unlike the radical streak of charismatic community. For Stark, religious institutions in such circumstances have as much reality and genuineness as individuals, a reality which is ideally and effectively communicated through the agency of the sacraments and the succession of the priesthood. Stark recognized the limitations of the charisma theory in its general application to all religions and social movements for Weber had provided little explanations about the socio-psychological origins of charismatic devotion. Although in his works, he stressed on the importance of man's needs for the cosmic meaning of suffering i.e theology and for saviours offering roads to personal salvation, he took the existence of charismatic leadership as given, and rather focused on the implications of charisma for social change.

One of the most significant modifications to Weber's theoretical ideas has emerged out of the Critical school of thought. Habermas (2007) in his works on communicative action reconstructed the notion of human interaction through a concept of reason which is not grounded in instrumental or objectivistic terms, but rather in an "emancipatory communicative act" which would make possible a social life in modernity. The foundation for this communicative action is his reworking of Weber's conceptualization of rationality which he views as limited in its scope as the focus is retained on the subjective meaning of one social actor. Habermas argues that rationality while being

instrumental/purposive, it is also communicative, i.e involves expanding the scope of mutual understanding in communication, thus bringing in the linguistic medium of possible understanding. Habermas explicitly utilises this expansion of Weberian rationality in communicative action to explain the new politics in New Social Movements. He points out that in rejecting “colonization”, the new social movements reasserts communicative action rationality, and creating the possibility of a public sphere.

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#### **4.6 SUMMING UP**

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In this unit, we learned about Weber’s contributions to the understanding of social movements. We learned that Weber views the emergence and assimilation of charismatically derived goals and norms as a normal aspect of social change. The concepts are part of Weber’s typology of commitment towards a specific action and rationality, however, in reality, these types often combine and overlap in social movements.

#### **Key Words:**

Charisma, Authority, Rationality, Leadership, Religion

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#### **4.7 QUESTIONS**

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1. How does Weber’s explain ‘revolution’?
2. Discuss the relevance of charismatic authority and community in Weberian sociology.
3. Elaborate on the complexities of routinization of charisma.
4. Distinguish between Weberian and Post-Weberian notions of rationality.

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## **UNIT 5: THEORIES ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT: STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALIST**

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### **UNIT STRUCTURE**

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Talcott Parsons' Structural Functionalism and social change
- 5.4 Neil Smelser's Theory of Collective Behaviour
- 5.5 Summing Up
- 5.6 Questions
- 5.7 Recommended Readings and References

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### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The attempt to conceptualising, and refining the definition of social movements and develop theories on it have been the goal of sociological literature. In the previous units, we have discussed the idea of social movements, their types, and basic characteristics. In addition, we also looked at the various approaches and theories that have developed to understand the dynamics of social movements. While there have been arguments that theorization of movements themselves are far removed from the activism, it is still necessary to accept that any action that is not informed from a theoretical understanding can make movements counterproductive. Thus, in this unit, we shall look at the structural-functional theory or approach on the understanding of social movements.

Structural functionalist perspective has often been criticised for emphasising on social order and status-quo. Ralf Dahrendorf (1959) had rightly pointed out that functionalism is beneficial while trying to understand consensus. As a conflict theorist, he often took the opposite view of functionalists and stated that whereas functionalists believe that society was oscillating very slightly, if not completely static, the reality was

that "every society at every point is subject to process of change" and that any form of social order comes from coercion from those at the top. However, this does not mean that structural functionalist thought does not account for change or collective action. While the approach does not account for the ideological framework of the Marxists, it has provided a significant contribution to understanding social movements especially through the concept of collective behaviour. Neil Smelser's value-added theory on collective behaviour is one such approach that uses the structural-functional approach in order to explain social movements. Before we look at Smelser's theory, we shall first try to understand the concept of collective behaviour and the structural functionalism briefly.

Collective behaviour is a social phenomenon that occurs frequently in modern society. They are significant because all forms of collective behaviour tend to disturb any equilibrium. Broadly, the concept refers to relatively spontaneous and relatively unstructured behaviour by large numbers of individuals acting with or being influenced by other individuals. They can be both spontaneous but also to a certain degree planned, and at the same time can be organized and predictable and not depending on the form. Thus, as a social process, collective behaviour does not necessarily reflect the existent social structure. Some of the more common forms of collective behaviour include crowds, mobs, panics, riots, disaster behaviour, rumours, mass hysteria, moral panics, and fads and crazes. Crowds (which include protest crowds), mobs, riots, and disaster behaviour involve people who are often physically interacting with one another. Rumours, mass hysteria, moral panics, fads and crazes, on the other hand, are some forms of collective behaviour involve people who are much more widespread geographically and who typically do not interact but share similar perceptions and beliefs. A social movement is also a form of collective behaviour that has been studied significantly compared to any other forms in the past decades due to its large participation, and its impact and influence on carrying out, resisting or at times undoing a social change.

### Stop and Read

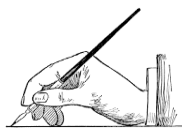
- According to Blumer (1957) collective behaviour refers to social processes and events which do not reflect existing social structure (laws, conventions, and institutions), but which emerge in a "spontaneous" way.
- According to Ginneken (2003), collective behaviour is an action which is neither conforming (in which actors follow prevailing norms) nor deviant (in which actors violate those norms).
- Tilly (1990) sees collective behaviour as involving the study of crowds, fads, disasters, panics and social movements. He argues that this behaviour may go on spontaneously and unpredictably in many geographical areas and involve very large numbers of people such as in the case of riots.
- For Oliver (2008), collective behaviour is the relatively spontaneous and unstructured behaviour engaged in by large numbers of people who are reacting to a common stimulus.

Several theories have developed to explain the origins, characteristics and elements of collective behaviour. Some of the more significant ones are the contagion theory, convergence theory, emergent norm theory and lastly the value-added theory. The contagion theory primarily looks at collective behaviour as an emotional and irrational phenomenon that results from the influence of the crowd. Developed by French scholar Gustave Le Bon (2006), the theory reflected the intellectuals' beliefs of his time where they perceived a crowd as space where individuals no longer can control their unconscious instincts and become violent and even savage. Convergence theory, on the other hand, states that crowd behaviour reflects the beliefs and intentions that individuals already share before they join a crowd.

Emergent norm theory states that generally, people are not sure how to behave when they begin to interact in collective behaviour. As they discuss their potential behaviour, norms governing their behaviour emerge, and social order and rationality then guide their behaviour. Lastly, value-added theory, popularised by Smelser, suggests that collective behaviour results when several conditions exist, including structural strain, generalized beliefs, precipitating factors, and lack of social control.

Collective behaviour is thus a dynamic phenomenon with varied forms that alters and modifies the social structure. While early sociologists studied the concept as a response to modernization, urbanization and industrialization, collective behaviour today is seen to be directed towards issues. In the following section, we shall try to understand the structural-functionalist approach of Talcott Parsons towards collective behaviour and will deal with Smelser's value-added theory in greater detail.

### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



1. How do you define collective behaviour?

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2. List the major forms of collective behaviour.

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3. What are the broad ways of explaining collective behaviour?

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## **5.2 OBJECTIVES**

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In this unit, we will briefly discuss the concept of collective behaviour. We will further discuss in detail Talcott Parsons' structural-functionalist approach on social movements. We shall do this by elaborating on Neil Smelser's value-added theory on collective behaviour. By the end of this unit, you are expected to:

- Explain how collective behaviour is defined and identify the common forms of collective behaviour including social movement;
- Analyse the theoretical explanations of Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism on collective behaviour and its influence on Smelser's theory;
- Explain the value-added approach of Neil Smelser on social movements.

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## **5.3 PARSONS' STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

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Before we explain the structural-functionalist approach on social movement, it is necessary to recap on the structural functionalist school of thought and its influence on Smelser's conceptualization of social movement. Functionalism is built on the legacy of Comte, Saint-Simon and Durkheim. It was American sociologist Talcott Parsons who theoretically expanded on the viewpoint that society which is a system of social structures possess the mechanisms to evolve and integrate processes and institutions as elements (parts) of the system, which help in its own self-maintenance. Society, is thus, viewed as a complex and interconnected pattern of functions, with its own specific needs which are met by the various structures and change as a phenomenon features in order to establish equilibrium when necessary by overcoming any resistance, i.e the resolution of strain or conflict in the social system that may come to the

existing structures. The strain or conflict typically occurs when the needs of the system are not being met rising to new forms, ideas, norms, patterns, roles, organisation etc that put pressure on the existing equilibrium. It is this structural strain that becomes the new point of development towards a new equilibrium.

There are several factors that cause structural strain. According to Parsons (1951), changes in the demographic characteristics of the population, changes in the physical environment particularly through exhaustion of resources, technological changes, and development of new “cultural configuration” such as new religious ideas, legal forms thereby creating new vested interest, can all lead to strain. The subsequent change can occur at two levels. At the first level, Parsons included chains of processes such as the institutionalisation of innovation, rationalisation of new vested interests and its traditionalization. This can occur through slow, adaptive changes of role differentiation, socialisation and institutionalisation processes and their attendant strains. The second is through social movements especially ‘revolutionary’ ones which bring sudden change and alter the equilibrium. Social movements, however, require their own sets of conditions to ‘shake’ the order. Parsons’ argued that for any revolutionary transformation to emerge, a large section of people must feel dissatisfied with the existing structure and system. There is a need for a counter or alternative culture to form so that the dissatisfied population can engage and relate to it. This new emerging culture would be represented by a new ideology that would legitimise the claims of the movement. Finally, an organisational framework is needed to seek support or draw power to itself. But Parsons’ also pointed out that most revolutionary movements have a tendency to focus on idealistic and utopian beliefs, thus necessitating a process of adaption (primarily through some form of value-consensus) when the movements do achieve goals in order to nullify any ambivalence between its goals and values in reality, i.e., they must change their goals as initial aims are met or they risk dissolution.

By looking at the self-maintenance tendency of systems, Parsonian structural functionalism has focussed more on stability and continuity where each new component emerges to compensate for the variation in the previous. The macro perspective of structural functionalism has been criticised by critical and conflict approaches alike for reducing movements to a process of adaptation of structural strain and an orderly, moving equilibrium. Nevertheless, Parsons' ideas on social change were instrumental in the formation of Smelser's structural strain approach. We shall discuss it in further details in the next section.

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#### **5.4 SMELSER'S THEORY ON COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOUR**

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We briefly mentioned Neil Smelser's theory of collective behaviour in Unit 1. Smelser worked with Parsons and was greatly influenced by him. Like his mentor, Smelser's systematic functional attempt too took equilibrium as the foundation upon which one was to study any form of collective behaviour. Smelser (1962), thus, inevitably argue that social movements are also a consequence of strains in the social structure, "an impairment of the relations among, and consequent inadequate function of, the components of social action". In his seminal and influential work *Theory of Collective Behaviour* (1962), Smelser outlined a 'value-added' theory of collective behaviour where he conceptualizes change as a 'value-added process' in which a number of variables or conditions are combined in a sequence to produce the effect of change. His comprehensive theory includes a wide range of phenomena and collective behaviour as diverse as panics, crazes, hostile outbursts, riots, revivals reform movements, and revolutionary movements, often perceived as spontaneous and unpredictable manifestations of social disorder, under one conceptual frame, the assumption being that the same factors are at work in all these collective forms (Morris and Herring, 1984). Of these, he looks into details five types viz. panic, the craze, the hostile outburst, the norm oriented, and

the value-oriented movement- the first two types of beliefs concern facilities, the remaining three roles, norms, and values respectively and each type is differentiated on the basis of “generalised belief”. Smelser makes a division between 'norm-oriented movements' (for example, social reform movements) and 'value-oriented movements' (for example, religious and revolutionary movements) and a further distinction between norm- and value-oriented movements and 'panic responses', 'craze responses' and 'hostile outbursts' .

Borrowing the logic of ‘social action’ from Parsons and Shils and ‘value-added’, employed by Samuelson and others in economics, Smelser’s goal was to also provide a sociological explanation for phenomena generally interpreted as psychological manifestations of primitive individual or group mentality thereby demonstrating that “it is possible to use the same theoretical framework to analyse both conventional and collective behaviour.” This represented a breakaway from Chicago school tradition of Blumer etc where he rejected the claim that collective behaviour and conventional behaviour constitute separate coherent realms of reality. Also by attempting to identify the specific structural conditions that make it possible to predict and explain the occurrence of specific forms of collective behaviour, he rejected the idea that it has unique characteristics that cannot be studied through the functionalist approach.

The value-added theory is based on the assumption that certain situations are necessary for the development of a social movement where each step in the production process adds something to the finished product and must combine in a particular pattern. Thus, with each combination, a specific pattern emerges, ruling out the possibilities of the rest. Smelser’s theory specified six necessary conditions or determinants to predict collective behaviour: structural conduciveness, structural strain, generalized beliefs, precipitating factors, mobilization for action, and social control factors of

which conduciveness, strain, and social control were structural in nature. These determinants are briefly discussed below:

1. Structural conduciveness: Conduciveness refers to the extent that structural characteristics permit or encourage collective behaviour. Participants must become aware of a significant problem and have the opportunity to engage in collective action. According to Smelser, movements are more likely to occur when a people or groups of people, class, or a system can be identified out as the source of the problem, when channels for expressing grievances either are not available or fail and when the aggrieved have a chance to communicate among themselves. Thus, the structure (e.g. physical proximity between the participants, legal structures that allow people to invalidate the norms, etc.) themselves should permit collective behaviour to an extent.
2. Structural strain: Smelser defines strain “as an impairment of the relations” among and consequently inadequate functioning of the components of social action viz. values, norms, mobilization into organized roles, and situational facilities. Thus, value strain poses the issue of commitment; normative strain concerns the integration of human interaction; the strain on mobilization concerns the balance between motivated activity and its rewards; the strain on facilities concerns the adequacy of knowledge and skills. Each level of strain along with the various combinations produces a specific type of action. The "strain" variable is most prominent because it links Smelser's analysis to Parson's structural/functionalist framework.
3. Generalized beliefs: Those beliefs that activate people for participation in episodes of collective behaviour are referred to as generalized beliefs. They reduce the ambiguity created by conditions of structural strain and help restructure an ambiguous

situation in a short-circuited way i.e. jump from extremely high levels of generality to specific, concrete situations. Generalized beliefs prepare individuals for collective action by creating a "common culture" within which leadership, mobilization, and concerted action can take place. Smelser focuses on five categories of general beliefs that are found in the culmination of collective behaviour. They are - a) hysteria, which transforms an ambiguous situation into an absolutely potent, generalized threat; b) wish-fulfilment, which reduces ambiguity by positing absolutely efficacious, generalized facilities; c) hostility, which involves removing some agent or object perceived as a generalized threat or obstacle; d) norm-oriented beliefs, which envision the reconstitution of a threatened normative structure ; and e) value-oriented beliefs, which envision the reconstitution of a threatened value system (Smelser, 1962, p. 83).

4. Precipitating factors or events: According to Smelser, even if the first three conditions are present, without a specific event in a specific time and place, collective behaviour may not occur. This is the role of the precipitating factor to reinforce the existing generalized belief, and to give it concrete and immediate substance.
5. Mobilization for action: Mobilization for Smelser is the process by which participants are mobilized for action. Similar to Chicago theorists, Smelser argued that movements proceed through stages and that pre-existing or newly created organizations facilitate the growth and spread of movements after they emerge. Smelser distinguished between the mobilizing role of pre-existing and newly created organizations (1962, p. 276). This point marks the onset of panic, the outbreak of hostility, or the beginning of agitation for reform or revolution. In this process of mobilization, the behaviour of leaders is extremely important.

6. The operation of social control: Social control refers to how authorities encourage, prevent, interrupt, deflect, or inhibit collective behaviour. This variable focused almost exclusively on how authorities block or prevent collective behaviour. His basic message was that if authorities are indecisive, appear weak, or refuse to use necessary force they facilitate the growth and spread of movements. Smelser distinguished between two broad types: a) those social controls which minimize conduciveness and strain. In a broad sense, these controls prevent the occurrence of an episode of collective behaviour because they attack very nonspecific determinants and b) those social controls which are mobilized only after a collective episode has begun to materialize. These determine how fast, how far, and in what directions the episode will develop.

Thus, Smelser (1968: 8) defined collective behaviour as "mobilization on the basis of a belief which redefines social action". A central role is attributed to the "generalized belief" because collective behaviour is guided by various kinds of beliefs and it is the basis for non-institutionalized mobilization as well as the criterion by which collective behaviour forms can be distinguished. True to Smelser's structural-functionalist roots, he emphasizes the centrality of structural influences, most notably structural conduciveness, structural strain, and social control thereby shifting the focus to structural problems at the societal level and, then, how the individual integrates his or her action according to different levels of social action. Thus, Smelser anticipates social movements arising in the context of severe strain, such as political conflict, wars, economic depression etc in the wider society; that a prerequisite for their development is the growth and spread of a generalized norm-oriented or value-oriented belief; and that participants must be mobilized for action in the form of movement activity. This positivist determinism of Smelser's theory, however, has been criticised for its limitations in the conceptual separation of norm and value-

orientation as one movement's norm may be another movement's value (Johnston, 2014). When theories fail to account for the diversity of the movements then it fails as a result of its own abstractness. Nevertheless, Smelser's work and ideas were breakthroughs because it included mobilization and social control as central variables which were not done previously. He thus argued that while movements groups are often contextualised in organizations, they are not necessarily organized in the name of social movement. Instead, mobilization occurs because such prior organization come to share the generalized beliefs on the importance and significance of the organizational goals are important from the standpoint of the movement. Thus, the ideological link becomes significant between a particular social movement and the pre-existing organization.

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## **5.5 SUMMING UP**

In this unit, we have learned that structural functionalism, in essence, views social movement as an effect of rapid social change caused primarily by structural factors and where all strains are seen as disruptive. This was discussed in details through Smelser's formulation of collective behaviour where all forms are viewed as non-institutionalized guided by and mobilized on the basis of a cognitive belief and occurs under strain.

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## **5.6 QUESTIONS**

1. What do you understand by collective behaviour? Explain.
2. What are various ways through which collective behaviour has been studied?
3. Explain Parsons' view on social change and social movement.
4. Discuss Smelser's view on the structural strain and generalised belief in the understanding of collective behaviour.



5. What are major arguments of Smelser's value-added theory? Explain.

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