

Movements: Civil liberties and human rights movements

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Abstract: Social movements mainly take the form of non-institutionalized collective political action which struggle for political and /or social transformation. In India, these movements occurred since past time. The phrase 'movement' is often used differently by different social activists, political leaders and scholars. Some academics use the term 'movement' interchangeably with 'organisation' or 'union'. Other social researchers use it to mean a historical trend or tendency. Some claim to launch movements by issuing press statements on public issues.

Key words; Fundamental rights, UNO charter, UNHRC, Liberty, equality and Fraternity Movement,

Introduction:

'Social movement' grown in European languages in the beginning of nineteenth century. This was the period of social disturbance. The political leaders and writers were concerned with the liberation of exploited classes and the creation of a new society by changing value systems as well as institutions and/or property relationships. Their philosophical orientation is reproduced in their description. Nevertheless, since the early 1950s, various scholars have provided detail account of the notion of social movements. According to social theorists, A social movement is a deliberate collective endeavour to promote direction and by any means, not excluding violence, illegality, revolution or withdrawal into 'utopian' community. Social movements are thus clearly different from historical movements, tendencies or trends. It is important to note, however, that such tendencies and trends, and the influence of the unconscious or irrational factors in human behaviour, may be of crucial importance in illuminating the problems of interpreting and explaining social movement.

Many sociological scholars and theorists elaborated the phrase social movement. Herbert Blumer stated that Social movements can be viewed as collective enterprises to establish a new order of life. They have their inception in the condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living. According to William Kornhauser, mass movements mobilize people who are alienated from the going system, who do not believe in the legitimacy of the established order, and who therefore are ready to engage in efforts to destroy it. The greatest number of people available to mass movement will be found in those sections of society that have the fewest ties to the social order. Doug McAdam described that social movements are those organized efforts, on the part of excluded groups, to promote or resist changes in the structure of society that involve recourse to non-institutional forms of political participation. Sidney Tarrow

inferred that rather than seeing social movements as expressions of extremism, violence, and deprivation, they are better defined as collective challenges, based on common purposes and special solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.

Social movements often ascend with the objective to bring about changes on a public issue, such as safeguarding the right of the tribal population to use the forests or the right of displaced people to settlement and compensation. While social movements social change, counter movements sometimes arise in defence of status quo.

Features of social movements are as under:

An important feature of social movement is the sense of belonging and group consciousness. Such consciousness can be brought about through active participation of the group members.

Social movements lead to the formation of an entirely new social, economic, and political order.

Most of the social movements tend to develop a new set of ideas, which become obligatory for the members of the group to adopt and follow. It is understandable that the social movements involve collective action instead of individual action. Social movements may be organized or unorganized. Social movements may be nonviolent in nature or they may also turn violent.

The objective of a social movement is to bring about or resist social change in the society.

The life of the social movement is not certain. This is because it may continue for a long period or it may die out soon.

There are many instances of social movement. When Raja Ram Mohan Roy campaigned against sati and formed the Brahma Samaj, protectors of sati formed Dharma Sabha and appealed the British not to enact against Sati. When campaigners demanded education for girls, many protested that this would be catastrophic for society. When crusaders campaigned for widow remarriage, they were socially embargoed. When the so called 'lower caste' children registered in schools, some 'upper caste' children were withdrawn from the schools by their families. Farmer movements have often been viciously suppressed. The social movements of former excluded groups like Dalits have often invoked retaliatory action. In simple term, these movements emerged and highlighted some of the major issues such as gender and environment.



Source: women movement for Rights. Bangalore

Main analyst and participant in social movements in India, Sanjay Sangvi, recognized the major agendas of them as "Movements of landless, unorganised labour in rural and urban areas, adivasis, dalits, displaced people, peasants, urban poor, small entrepreneurs and unemployed youth took up the issues of livelihood, opportunities, dignity and development."

Popular movements in India are

- ❖ Chipko movement,
- ❖ Save Silent Valley,
- ❖ Narmada Bachao Andolan,
- ❖ Koel Karo, Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha,
- ❖ Jhola Aandolan chutmarika (fighting polythene),
- ❖ Appiko movement,
- ❖ Save Kudremukh, Lok Satta Movement,
- ❖ Swadhyay Movement, Swatantra Sharad Joshi,
- ❖ Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha.

These movements mainly dissociated themselves from political parties, or attempted to cut across the philosophies of the political parties. Yet many of them entrenched themselves or drew from ideologies of the Mahatma Gandhi.

Civil liberties:

Civil liberties is associated with basic rights and freedoms that are guaranteed either explicitly identified in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, or deduced through the years by courts and legislators. Civil liberties are personal assurances and freedoms that the government cannot curtail, either by law or by judicial interpretation without due process.

Though the range of the term differs amongst various nations, basic Civil liberties include:

- Freedom of speech
- The right to privacy
- The right to be free from unreasonable searches of your home
- The right to a fair court trial
- The right to marry
- The right to vote

Other civil liberties include the right to own property, the right to defend oneself, and the right to

Human rights movements:

Human Rights are described as all those rights which are indispensable for the defence and maintenance of self-esteem of individuals and create conditions in which every human being can develop his personality to

the fullest extent. Human rights become operative with the birth of an individual. Human rights are intrinsic in all the individuals regardless of their caste, religion, sex and nationality. Because of their vast significance to human beings; human rights are also called fundamental rights, basic rights, inherent rights, natural rights and birth rights. Human rights are the unchallengeable rights of a person by virtue of being a human. All or some of these may or may not be written in the Constitution and laws of a country. These rights are considered to be widespread and have been concretized in various categories. These may be political, economic, social, or cultural. Theoretically, human rights belong to each individual, they are indivisible, and valid for all times.

civil and democratic rights.

It has been observed recently that there are several groups in different states working on human rights. The most important and famous are the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR). They have their formal or informal branches and/or network organisations in many states with the same names, though autonomous.

Moreover, the important and active state-level organisations are as under:

- The Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC)
- The Committee for the Protection of Democratic Rights (CPDR) in Maharashtra
- The Association for Democratic Rights (AFDR) in Punjab
- The Naga People's Movement for Human Rights in Nagaland
- Lok Adhikar Sangh in Gujarat
- Citizens for Democracy in Delhi, Mumbai and other places.

These organisations are not membership-based. They have office bearers such as the convenor, president, secretary, etc. In some places, the executive committee functions jointly. They do not have definite objectives or constitutions to lay down their functions. When there is requirement, they form committees and subcommittees to carry out certain functions. Committees of Concerned Citizens have been formed in several states from issue to issue and time to time. Sometimes, they try to intercede between the state and political groups engaged in direct actions and become the victims of so-called 'encounter' actions of the police or military. They have a

Conclusion: a social movement is a huge movement and a joint attempt of people to bring social change, or to struggle for any change. The notion central to any social movement is that people interfere in the process of social change, rather than remaining mere spectators or passive participants in the web and flow of life. There are many types of social movement. Human Rights are the basic human needs and demands. They are essential for the all-round development of a human being. Henceforth, it is expected that civilized state will incorporate these rights in its constitution and try to guarantee that its citizens can live comfortably.

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