

Modalities and Strategies of New Social Movement

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Abstract

New social movements have emerged in post-modern or the advanced capitalist societies. New social movements pose new challenges to the established cultural, economic and political orders of advanced capitalist societies. The causes behind the origin of new social movements are the change in politics, fragmentation and widening of political debate, decline in conventional political policies, etc. These encompass wider areas addressing varied issues pertaining to the environment, peace, civil liberty, identity, freedom and personal dignity and marginalized such as women, an ethnic minority group and gay people. The article surfaces the conceptual understanding, modalities and strategies of new social movements.

Keywords

Social Movement, New Social Movement, Civil Society Movements, # MeToo Movement.

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Introduction

Post-Modernism influenced the emergence of new social movements. The causes behind the origin of new social movements are the change in politics, fragmentation and widening of political debate, decline in conventional political policies, etc. In post-modern society, the power of 'New Social Movements' emerges and which poses new challenges to the established cultural, economic and political orders of advanced capitalist societies and which commits to furthering the provision of rights to historically marginalized such as women, ethnic minorities group and gay people (*Simon Hallsworth, 1994*). Similarly, *Nancy Fraser (1995)* says that in this society, change in '*the public sphere*' takes place where citizens with different statuses can deliberate about their common affairs.

According to *Simon Hallsworth*, the term 'new social movement' generally applied to movements in liberal democratic societies (the 1960s-1970s) like feminism, environmentalism, anti-racism, anti-nuclear and civil rights movements. These movements held to pose new challenges to the established cultural, economic and political orders of advanced capitalist societies. For example NSM for *challenging traditional values* (anti-abortion movement), *long-established social movements* i.e. trade union, and *conventional political parties*. They sometimes broadly incorporate religious movements like Moonies, and Human Potential Movements; and non-political group movements like New Age Travellers.

Basic Objectives behind New Social Movements (NSM)

- Defense of natural and social environment perceived to be under threat.
- Creation of a better society for harmonious living.
- Commitment to furthering the provision of rights to marginalized, historically and traditionally, such as women, ethnic, minorities, gays, etc.

Characteristics of New Social Movements

- They extend beyond political issues.
- They seek participatory democracy at parochial level in bureaucracy, and decision-making by full participation.
- They are diverse and fragmented with many organizations and informal groups concerning the same issues.
- They involve and use a variety of tactics from direct legal action to civil obedience through appearing on television, public books, etc.
- They are contrary to conventional political organizations as NSM involves a young generation between the age group 16-30 years, from the middle class,

working in public sectors or born to parents working in the public sector, and students as its members.

- They give importance to post-materialistic values i.e. quality of life than material comfort.

Rajendra Singh (2001) has stated the following characteristics of the New Social Movement (NSM).....

1. These movements raise the issues of the self-defense of the community or group against the state.
2. They are pluralistic in structure, global and trans-human in character.
3. They encompass protests against nuclear war and advocacy for the environment, peace, civil liberty, identity, freedom and personal dignity.
4. They evolve through grassroots politics and actions that initiate micro-movements of small groups, focusing on localized issues and having a limited institutional base.
5. Their goal is to reorganize the State, society and economy...create public space for democratic discourse on issues of autonomy and freedom of the individual as well as collectivities.
6. They don't employ the Marxist paradigm of explaining conflicts and class struggles.

Thus, NSMs organize within the civil society, they aim at changes in values and lifestyle, their organization develops at grassroots level and their medium of action is direct and involves cultural innovation.

There are many Indian sociologists who have presented their approach to the new social movements are- *Omvedt (1993)*, *Oommen (2001)*, *Pattnaik (2011)*, *D'monte (1989)*, *Frank and Fuentes (1987)*. They summed up new social movements as a non-party, political grass-roots level popular initiatives that are single issue-based and anti- systemic if not anti-state, collective actions that tend to evolve due to multiple perceptions of modernity as well as meaningful articulations of identities.

Dhanagare (2013) concludes based on the views of *Habermas (1987)* and *Cohen (1985)* that contemporary social movements have to be understood as channels of outlet for the development of new social values and identities and for projecting new development alternatives to the hegemonic linear model of development driven by modern technology.

Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai (2000) have differentiated social movement and global social movement as the former is concerned with the social issues of an

individual country while the latter is concerned with common issues in several countries or issues affecting the world as a whole.

In the Indian context, the movements regarding women, the environment, farmers, and Dalits (ex-untouchables) are characterized as New Social Movements (Guha, 1989; Omvedt, 1993). Such movements arise in the civil society because the state is unable to resolve the problems of exploitation, poverty and unequal development. Thus, NSMs become the vanguards of democracy.

#Me Too Movement

Social media-generated movements are new forms of social movement which are not spoken of earlier. Thus, *the Me Too movement* is a new social movement and public sphere that gives a platform to women to surface their experiences and victimization of sexual harassment in workplaces in the global era. It is primarily organized through social media where it is symbolized as #MeToo. The Me Too movement had its origin in 2006, when an American social activist, *Tarana Burke* used the phrase on a social network site to evident the occurrence of sexual harassment particularly against women of color (not white) in low-income communities. The movement encourages harassment survivors to unite, to voice their stories of sexual assault, and pursue legal action against accountable harassers. In 2017, it gained momentum when several Hollywood actresses narrated their plight of harassment by their male colleagues through the MeToo movement. In India, this movement emerged in 2018 in the entertainment industry, further women in media and government also raised their voices through this movement. With the efforts of social activists, social legislation was enacted in India to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplaces with the name 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013'.

On the one hand, the movement by feminist abolitionists like Irish neo-abolitionists' Turn off The Red Light (*TORL*) campaign to see an end to the oldest oppression i.e. 'sex trade' and resist saying that prostitution is merely a job. This is also an example of a new social movement.

Environmental Movements as New Social Movement

Localized lower-class resistance which is relatively new to the larger processes of colonialism, imperialism and capitalism, also falls under the category of new social movement. For example, the localized struggles for promoting sustainability and prohibiting environmental crisis and environmental degradation such as *the Baliraja Dam Struggle* in Maharashtra in 1980s. This affected the livelihood of numerous people dependent on forest resources.

Where Guha (2000) underlines the four basic features of the environmental movements in India and narrates as firstly, their concern for social justice; secondly, the unique language of protest or the mode of protest. In industrial countries, modern methods like electronic media are used to disseminate, ideology, and information and to organize the protesters while in India, the methods of communication are mostly based on traditional networks and primordial loyalties like village community, caste, tribe, and lineage. Thirdly, the significant women's participation in these movements. Women's participation in environmental movements reflects that they are closer to nature and their day-to-day involvement in the use of nature.

Thus, new social movements pose new challenges to the established cultural, economic and political orders of advanced capitalist societies and encompass wider areas addressing varied issues pertaining to environment, peace, civil liberty, identity, freedom and personal dignity and marginalized such as women, ethnic minority group and gay people.

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