

Structure

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35.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to

- describe the link between social change and social movements
- explain the nature of social movements with the help of definitions, examples, types and functions
- examine the main factors associated with the origins of social movements
- describe the role of leadership and ideology in social movements
- point out the various stages in the life cycle of social movement.

35.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit of this course we looked at ethnic relations and ethnic conflicts in India. In this unit we will discuss some aspects of collective actions of people which lead to social change. These types of actions are known as social movements. We will begin this unit by pointing out the link between

social change and social movements. We will then define what a social movement is, cite some examples of social movements, list the types of social movements and point out the functions of social movements. This will be followed by an examination of the origins of social movements. Here we will focus on the three factors associated with the emergence of social movements. The three factors described are **relative deprivation, structural strain and revitalisation**. We shall also point out the importance of discussing the origins of social movements. In the section after this we will be describing the role of leadership and **ideology** in social movements. Then we shall briefly state the stages in the life cycle of a social movement.

35.2 SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

One of the main problems of sociology is to understand how and why societies change. All societies undergo changes. In some cases these may be radical in the sense that some social institutions may be replaced by new ones. Or, there may be major changes in the existing social institutions. For example, the prevalence of nuclear families in the place of traditional joint families has brought a change in the family as a social institution. Furthermore, there are other institutions, which no longer exist. For instance, if a society based on slavery is replaced by feudalism then the social institutions in that slave society may disappear too. If we observe societies over a period of time (i.e., historically) we will find that changes have taken place in all of them. In some cases these may be gradual, i.e., spread over a long period of time. In others they may be rapid.

Social change, as we know by now, does not take place merely by chance or due to some factors predetermined by fate. There are several forces operating simultaneously in society, which bring about change. Some of these may be external to social institutions. Changes caused by a change in the economy or the production relations is one such instance. Industrialisation creates changes in social institutions. The changes in the family structure, mentioned above, are caused by the impact of industrialisation. Nuclear families are more adaptive to the nature of industrial societies than joint families. The latter are more suited to pre-industrial, mainly agrarian, societies. At the same time, there are change producing agents inside a society as well. Social movements are one of these internal forces, which contribute to changes. Of course, they may at times prevent or resist changes. We shall look at the change promoting and change resisting aspects of social movements in our next section.

35.3 NATURE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In this section we will describe the main features of social movements. We will be giving definitions, examples, types and functions of social movements.

35.3.1 Definition

The International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1972) defines a social movement as a variety of collective attempts to bring about change. The attempts

may be to bring about change in certain social institutions and to create an entirely new social order. Or the attempts may represent a socially shared demand for change in some aspects of the social order. Turner and Kilhan define a social movement as a “collectivity which acts with some continuity to promote or resist change in the society or group of which it is a part” (cited by McLaughlen 1969: 27). Toch (1965) emphasises that a social movement is an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem they feel they share in common.

These definitions bring out, above all things, two important qualifying features of a social movement. Firstly, that social movements involve collective action as against actions of a small group of individuals. Secondly, the collective attempt is designed to promote change or resist change in the society in which the attempt is made. So collective attempt may be to alter, inaugurate, supplant, restore or reinstate all or some aspects of the social order.

Let us look at these two features in a little more detailed manner in order to understand how social movements are different from other kinds of collective behaviour like a mob or a crowd. We will also see the difference between social movements and other movements like a cooperative movement or a trade union movement.

Social movements involve collective action by the people. Any form of collective action cannot be labelled as a social movement, even if it is directed towards changing the existing social values. For example, in some places when a car or a truck knocks down a pedestrian a mob collects immediately and starts beating up the driver. The mob is provoked because the driver’s actions have led to injury or loss of life. Hence this could be regarded as a form of collective action to ensure sanctity of life and to prevent rash driving. But can we call this a social movement? No, because this is just an impulsive outburst. Hence, another feature of a social movement is that it should be sustained and not sporadic. Similarly social movement differs from a crowd by being a long-term collectivity, not a quick spontaneous grouping. However crowds may emerge as a result of social movements. A *morcha* taken up by members of a woman’s organisation, a part of the women’s social movement may attract a crowd.

At the same time one has to keep in mind that social movements are different from other movements in society. For instance, we have the cooperative movement or the trade union movement, which we are quite familiar with. Both these movements have features, which are common to those discussed above. Namely, they attempt to change the existing social relations and try to promote change. They are also sustained movements as they have existed over a period of time. However, they have one feature, which excludes them from being social movements. These movements are institutionalised movements. By this we mean that trade unions, cooperatives or such other organisations function under a given set of rules. These include procedures for recruitment and subsequently, expulsion, exclusion and punishment. The membership of these organisations is not open to all. In fact membership may not be open to even those who are expected to be participants of the movement. Let us clarify this. A trade union is expected to fight for protecting and enhancing workers’ rights. But all workers do not automatically become members of a trade union. They can become members only if they agree to

the objectives of the trade union and they formally enroll as a member. Similarly a cooperative which is expected to help poor peasants will not automatically include all such people as its members. There are some formalities to be fulfilled such as registration of membership, purchase of shares etc. Therefore these organisations have a formal set of rules for membership. Only those accepting and abiding by these rules can hope to be included as members can be dropped or suspended from membership.

A movement, which is institutionalised in the above manner, can function with a fixed structure and a hierarchy. In other words, the structure of such organisations cannot change. A trade union will have its hierarchy based on authority. There will be a president, secretary and committee members etc. Each of them has separate responsibilities and they hold varying degrees of authority. This type of a hierarchy is necessary for any institutionalised movement. In fact this is what helps it to sustain itself.

Social movements on the other hand, will not have any of the above features. The two features of social movements, namely, sustained action and spontaneity operate simultaneously. These together distinguish a social movement from other movements. Existence of either of these features does not result in a social movement. To explain, earlier examples of trade unions and cooperatives show that these movements have sustained over a period of time. But this is because they are institutionalised and not because they are spontaneous. On the other hand, sporadic outbursts such as beating up a rash driver are collective behaviour, which is spontaneous. It is not a social movement because it is not sustained.

We are laying stress on spontaneity because social movements do not follow a fixed pattern of hierarchy. They are thus able to innovate new features of organisation. Institutionalisation would in fact prevent any form of innovation because of its fixed structures.

If we now take into account the features which we have discussed so far, we can define social movements as, collective action by large groups of people which is directed towards changing some of the values, norms and social relations in a society but which are spontaneous and sustained.

We had mentioned earlier in this section pertaining to the two qualifying features of social movements. That a social movement constitutes a collective attempt not only to promote change but also to resist change. This feature has to be kept in mind because all social movements do not attempt to change the existing situations. For instance, we all know that right from the nineteenth century there have been collective attempts to remove the social practice of sati. Raja Ram Mohan Roy actively campaigned against sati and was chiefly responsible for legal action being taken against sati in the nineteenth century. Even during his time, there were collective attempts to resist the introduction of the law abolishing sati. Even today there is a sizeable section of population who do not recognise or pay heed to the law against Sati.

The enthusiasm with which some people tried to celebrate and promote the performance of Sati in Deorala, Rajasthan, was a movement which could be regarded as change resisting (see figure 35.1). In addition, there could be movements, which promote casteism or, more specifically, attempt to reinforce the hegemony of the castes. Movements, which preach domination or

superiority of certain castes or a particular religion over others, movements that spread communal or ethnic prejudice, are all change-resisting movements. They attempt to change the prevalent norms, values and social relations and replace them with **obscurantist values**.

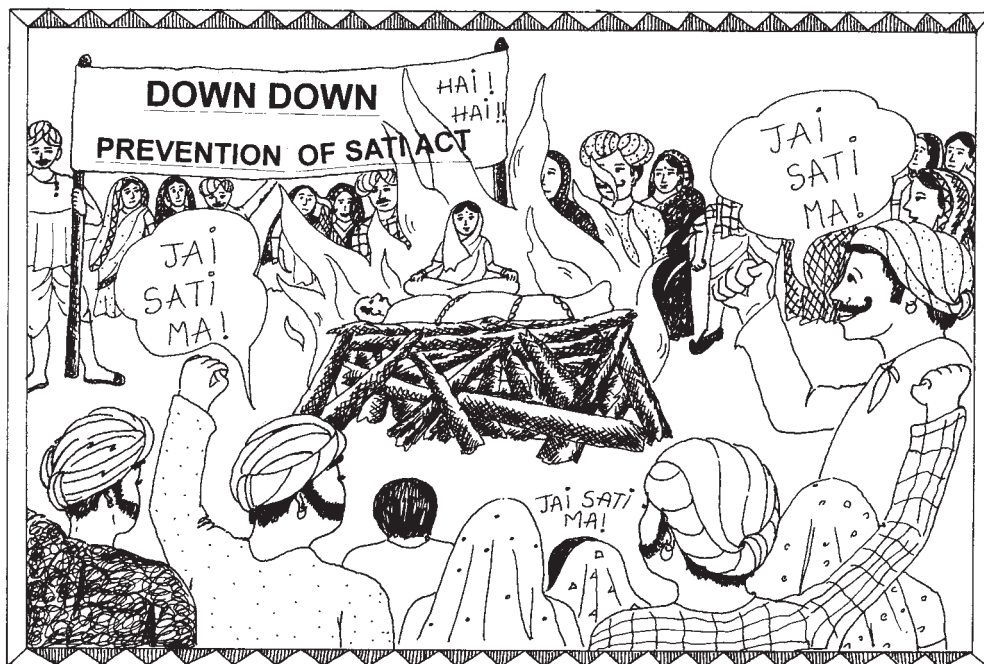


Fig. 35.1: Collective action to resist change prevention of sati act

35.3.2 Examples of Social Movements: Some Concrete Instances

We have so far attempted a definition of social movements. This should help us understand what social movements are and how they differ from other movements. However the discussion so far may appear somewhat abstract. Till now we only know some features of social movements. But what in concrete terms are social movements? One example which comes to our minds immediately is the process of sanskritisation expounded by the eminent sociologist, M.N. Srinivas. In this process we find that members of a caste group try to elevate their position to that of a caste deemed higher than their own. They do so by internalising the values, rituals and social behaviour of the members of that caste. Prof. Srinivas has given the cases of the Lingayats in Karnataka. We can find similar instances elsewhere. In a similar move the Rajbanshis in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts of West Bengal sought to elevate their position to that of the Kshatriya caste. This community belongs to the Bodo-Kachari group of North East India. Its members inhabit, apart from the above mentioned districts, parts of the neighbouring states of Assam and Bangladesh. Till the Census of 1901, the Rajbanshis were bracketed with the Koch, a tribe belonging to the same group. It was then believed that both came from the same ethnic origin. However in 1909 the Rajbanshis, under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Barman declared that their identity was different from that of the Koch. They stated that they were in fact Kshatriyas from North India who had taken refuge in this part of the country. The Kshatriya *Sabha* was formed and it urged all Rajbanshis to revert to their original status. The Rajbanshis started following the rituals of Kshatriyas such

as wearing the sacred thread, change in marriage practices, abstention from eating beef or pork, etc. They also started adopting the title “Thakur” along with their names. The Rajbanshis have been recognised as a separate group since the Census of 1911.

This movement is a social movement because it displayed the features of a social movement discussed earlier. Though the Rajbanshis formed an organisation (*Kshatriya Sabha*) and operated through it to elevate their status, it was not a formal organisation like a trade union or a peasant organisation. The *Sabha* did not have a formal set of rules and regulations relating to membership.

It is not necessary for a social movement to strive only for elevation of status; there can be movements with political or cultural dimensions. The Naxalite movement, which started in 1968 in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal, could also be regarded as a social movement. In this movement peasants and agricultural workers engaged in a violent struggle against those whom they defined as their exploiters. The movement spread to other parts of the country and it was declared illegal by the government. This in fact prevented it from developing a formal, institutional structure. The different groups engaged in various regions could operate only clandestinely i.e., secretly. However after 1978 the government removed the ban on Naxalites provided they discarded violence and used peaceful means to press for their demands. As a result several Naxalite groups declared themselves as political parties and developed formal institutional structures. The movement then ceased to be a social movement.

In the cultural field too we have social movements. We can observe such movements in literature and in drama. In films, the New Cinema or Parallel Cinema movement started in the late 1960s is one such instance. Young film-makers started making films, which were realistic and dealt with the everyday life of the common man. This was in contrast to the romantic films in the commercial sector. This movement did not originate from a formal organisation such as a federation or an association. It was started by film-makers who shared the common belief that realistic films based on good literature should be shown to the people.

We can cite the SNDP Movement (*Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana Movement*) as an example of a social movement which has social, political, educational and religious dimensions to it. The movement arose as a backward classes movement in the nineteenth century in Kerala. It focused on the conflict between untouchable castes (Izhavas, toddy tappers of South Travancore, Kerala) and the clean Hindu upper castes (Nayars, Nambudiris). The Izhavas were subject to several ritual as well as civil disabilities. They had to maintain a prescribed limit of distance from the upper caste, could not use the roads, tanks, wells or temples used by the higher castes. They were denied admission to the traditional caste Hindu schools and were kept away from administrative jobs. Under the leadership of Sri Narayana Guru Swamy, the Izhavas formulated a programme of social uplift. The issues they undertook were right of admission to public schools, recruitment to government employment, entry into temple and political representation. They fought for social mobility, for shift in the traditional distribution of power, and transformed themselves into a large ethnic block, which became politically viable. (Rao 1974: 22).

Activity 1

Take a map of India with all the states marked on it. Identify at least one social movement that has been associated with each state. Remember that a social movement can cover more than one state. Compare your answers if possible with those given by other students at your Study Centre.

We can now see that social movements have varied dimensions. As such they can cover all parts of our lives. There can be social movements, which promote change, and there can be those which resist change. This distinction has to be kept in mind because all social movements do not attempt to change the existing situation. Now let us move on to another aspect of social movements, namely, types of social movements.

35.3.3 Types of Social Movements

Social movements can be classified under various typologies depending on such factors like aim of the movement, organisation, means adopted to achieve the aims, value strength and so on. Some of the types are:

- i) **Migratory movements:** When a large number of people migrate due to discontent and or due to the shared hope for a better future in some other land, we talk of migratory movements. For instance the mass exodus of men to Gulf countries specially from the state of Kerala is an example of a migratory social movement. Similarly the mass migration of people from Bangladesh to India during troubled times is another instance of a migratory movement.
- ii) **Reform movements:** This type of a movement constitutes a collective attempt to change some parts of a society without completely transforming it. A reform movement accepts the basic pattern of the social order of that society and orients itself around an ideal. It makes use of those institutions such as the press, the government, the school, the church and so on to support its programme. Reform movements usually, rise on behalf of some distressed or exploited group. Reform movements are almost impossible in an authoritarian society. Such movements are mainly possible in democratic societies where people tolerate criticism. For example, the socio-religious reform movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in India aimed to remove social practices like sati, denial of education to women, ban on widow remarriage, ill treatment of widows, child marriage, caste disabilities and so on.
- iii) **Revolutionary movements:** Such a movement seeks to overthrow the existing system and replace it with a totally different one. Revolutionary movements aim at reconstructing the entire social order. They challenge the existing norms and propose a new scheme of values. The examples that immediately come to one's mind are the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution which resorted to overthrow the existing socio-political order prevailing in France and Russia respectively.
- iv) **Resistance or Reactionary movements:** These arise among people who are dissatisfied with certain aspects of change. The movement seeks to recapture or reinstate old values. For example the Islamic Fundamentalist movement and the *Rashtriya Swyam Sevak Sangh* (RSS) can be classified under the heading reactionary or resistance movements.

Within every society, at different points of time we can have general movements or specific movements. All these types of movement generally have a programme of protest and action, establishment of a power relationship favourable to the movement and promotion of membership gratification.

35.3.4 Functions of Social Movements

So far we have defined and explained the main features of social movements with the help of examples and typologies. Another important aspect of social movements, which needs consideration, is the functional aspect of social movements.

According to Touraine (1968) social movements have three important functions. They are:

- i) **Mediation:** They help to relate the individual to the larger society. They give each person a chance to participate, to express his ideas and to play a role in the process of social change.
- ii) **Pressure:** Social movements stimulate the formation of organised groups that work systematically to see that their plans and policies are implemented.
- iii) **Clarification of Collective Consciousness:** This is a significant function. Social movements generate and develop ideas which spread throughout society. As a result group consciousness arises and grows.

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Define a Social Movement. Use two lines for your answer.
.....
.....
- ii) Which of the following are social movements. Tick the right answers.
 - a) Bhakti Movement
 - b) Panchayati Raj
 - c) Strike by workers
 - d) Brahma Samaj
- iii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.
 - a) All social movements strive only for elevation of status.
 - b) Reform movements aim to change some parts of a society while revolutionary movements want to reconstruct the entire social order.
 - c) Social movements help an individual in a society to relate himself to a larger group in that society.
- iv) Which of the following movements are change promoting (CP) and which are change resisting (CR). Mark CP or CR against each of the following movements.

- a) Anti-Reservation movement
- b) Sati Movement
- c) Women's movement for equal status
- d) Literacy Movement
- e) New Cinema Movement
- f) Movement for entry of untouchables into temples.

35.4 ORIGINS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

After having described the main features of a social movement, let us move on to the question of emergence of a social movement. What are the social conditions or motivational forces that are both necessary and sufficient to the generation of a social movement? In this section we will discuss the origins of social movements by describing three factors which are associated with the emergence of social movements. But before doing so, let us specify the minimum conditions that are necessary for a social movement to emerge.

A social movement represents an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem or problems that they feel they have in common. In doing so the people must first of all understand the problem. Therefore, the problem must be observable. Secondly, it must be objective. This means that it exists even if we are not aware of it. A low caste status or lack of realism in films is there even if people at a given point of time are not aware of its existence. When people become aware of the problem it means that their consciousness of the problem is real. Hence they are now subjectively aware of the objective situation. This would mean that problems are not created by people out of nothing. They exist in reality but it is only when people actually understand a problem that they try to find out means to overcome it.

All this may seem somewhat complicated but it actually is quite simple if we try to go into major details. First of all we must try to understand why there is a sudden need for collective action. We are using the word 'sudden' because if a problem exists in reality why is it that people react to it only at a given point of time and not earlier. In order to understand this mystery, or rather, understand the very existence of social movements, we must go into its origins. It is only then that we can understand the nature of any social movement. M.S.A. Rao (1979) had done a great deal of research on social movements and he identified three factors relating to the origins of social movements. We shall attempt to explain these in this section.

35.4.1 Relative Deprivation

The first factor is relative deprivation. A social movement usually starts because the people are unhappy about certain things. They may feel that they are not getting enough. In other words, they feel that they are deprived of something. The Naxalite movement would have this as a cause. The peasants felt that they were being exploited and deprived of their rights and the fruits of their labour. They therefore decided to protest. Similarly, the movement for abolition of reservation of seats for backward classes in educational institutions, which

took place in Gujarat, was again a result of relative deprivation. The upper castes felt that their children were being deprived of seats in good schools because of the reservation policy. At the same time those pressing for more reservation are doing so because they too feel deprived.

We should keep in mind that deprivation is relative and not absolute. A movement against or for reservation does not mean that the concerned castes feel that they are totally deprived of educational facilities. They in fact feel that given their ability they are getting less. What we are trying to stress on here is that social movements do not arise only when there are extreme conditions, e.g. contradiction between the very rich and the very poor. Social movements can arise out of relative expectations and not necessarily out of extreme or absolute conditions.

35.4.2 Structural Strain

However, all social movements do not arise out of relative deprivation. They can also originate from structural strain. When the prevailing value system and the normative structure does not meet the aspirations of the people, the society faces strain. What happens at this time is that a new value system is sought so as to replace the old. This leads to conflicts and tension. Usually individuals in such a situation violate the social norms. For example where intercaste marriage is not permitted we may still find a few cases of such marriage, in violation of the norms. However only when individual actions are replaced by collective action does a social movement take place.

Let us take the example of the women's movement to illustrate the point. In a largely traditional society like India, women are usually assigned passive roles. A woman is expected to be subordinate to males. It is believed that as a daughter a female must obey her father; as a wife, her husband and as a widow, her sons. Such a value system would encourage women to be content as housewives and mothers. The duties outside the house, such as education, earning a livelihood etc. are the domain of males.

Over the years we can see that opportunities for both education and employment are being increasingly made available for women. As a result, the roles of women are changing. However the value system remains the same. Therefore, women may take up jobs but their household duties remain unchanged. This obviously results in greater burden of work on the working woman.

In employment too women are discriminated against. All jobs are not open to them. For example, though the employment of women as salaried workers has increased they are mainly employed as school teachers (that too in primary schools) or as office employees. In other jobs, such as factory work, the number of female employees has decreased. In technical education there is no legal discrimination against women, but we find that there are very few women engineers. In management institutes too the number of female students is very few.

These disparities occur mainly because we have, in keeping with our value system, categorised certain types of employment as 'manly' or masculine. Factory work, engineering, flying planes, managing industries or offices are 'manly' jobs. Women are more suited to 'feminine' jobs such as teaching children, working as typists, receptionists, telephone operators, airhostesses

etc. Parents and elders impress upon girls the type of jobs, which are suitable for them. If a girl has an aptitude for engineering her parent may dissuade her to take it up as a career and may possibly impress on her to read home science instead. Therefore even when there is no legal ban, the value system enforces women not to pursue certain careers.

Moreover, if a woman's place is in the home, a single woman working in the city and living alone is viewed as something unusual. Girls who go out to work or study are looked down upon in many places. People feel that if women educate themselves and take up jobs they will neglect their traditional duties and they will refuse to subordinate themselves to the men folk. Independent minded girls or those who are bold enough to venture out of their homes are regarded as easy prey to males. Such people are victims of eve teasing.

An accumulation of all these factors have made women challenge the existing values. This has resulted in the women's movement, which is also referred to as the feminist movement. Women who have become conscious of these prejudices and evils in society are now collectively trying to redefine the value system. This need has arisen because the traditional value system is causing strain to women who want to think and act as independent beings. As such this movement is not directed against males. It is only an assertion that a new value system based on equality of all human beings should replace the existing value system.

35.4.3 Revitalisation

We may quite often find that relative deprivation and structural strain are related to each other. They together form the basis of a social movement. In the case of the women's movement, relative deprivation is a cause for structural strain. Similarly an examination of social reform movements may reveal that both these causes exist. However we must keep in mind that social movements are not merely protest movements. Though social movements express dissatisfaction and dissent against the system, they may also offer a positive alternative. Indeed they may be started for revitalising the existing system which is undergoing structural strain. Revitalisation is therefore the third factor associated in the emergence of a social movement.

This urge for revitalisation can generate a movement, which promotes patriotism, and national pride could be caused by youth movements, which encourage young people to help and organise the oppressed, or the literacy movements are other examples. These movements are started in order to solve a problem collectively. They do not merely protest against what they define as wrong but also try to provide an alternative.

35.4.4 Importance of Understanding the Origins

The three factors discussed above are not exclusive, in the sense that if one exists the other two cannot. They are, as we have seen, interrelated. In fact we may find that all three can be found in most social movements. At the same time we will find that normally in any movement one of these predominates over the other two. In examining the origins of a social movement we have to try to locate the one which predominates. This is important for determining the shape of the movement. What does the movement try to gain? Which

interests does it represent? These are important questions for sociologists or for any one interested in studying changes in society. After all, if features of social movements are similar how does one distinguish one social movement from another? All social movements are not the same. They represent or fight for different sections of the population. At times two social movements may be contrary to one another. The pro- and anti-reservation stirrings are such instances. In some parts of Bihar we find that the poor peasants are organised under the Naxalite movement while the landlords have organised themselves under the *Bhoomi Sena* Movement. Different caste groups or religious communities organise social movements for revitalisation but these may be counterposed to each other. An analysis of the genesis of a social movement will help us in understanding these issues.

35.5 ROLE OF LEADERSHIP AND IDEOLOGY IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

People organise themselves to begin a social movement because they are discontented with the way things are. They wish to see it changed but despair at the available means of doing so. The mobilisation of discontent lies in bringing the affected group into action. Social movements constitute people's efforts to organise themselves to fight against inequalities, discrimination and deprivation. Widespread collective mobilisation has led to organised movements with defined ideologies and leaders who have brought important changes in the societies from which they originate (Rao 1979:1). Apart from the three factors mentioned in the previous section relating to the emergence of social movements, there are two more factors, which contribute to the origins as well as the sustenance of social movements. These factors are leadership and ideology. Let us look at them separately.

35.5.1 Leadership

No social movement begins all of a sudden because thousands of people feel that they have a common problem. While studying social movements we will inevitably find that in the initial phase or even later on, one person or a small group has motivated the others to start a movement. In most of the movements mentioned earlier we will find that they were shaped by a leader. The Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement was under the leadership of Panchanan Thakur who was the first to assert that the Rajbanshis were Kshatriyas. He mobilised the people around this demand. The Naxalite movement had the initial leadership of Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal and Jungal Santhal in West Bengal, N. Patnaik and Chandra Pullu Reddy and Nagi Reddy and Seetharamiah in Andhra Pradesh. The women's movement too has several leaders in different parts of the country. In Kerala the SNDP movement had Sri Narayana Guru as its chief leader. The movement was characterised by collective leadership with a division of labour among the different types of elites (Rao 1979: 251).

Leaders are important for movements because they help clarify the issues and thus shape the movement. It is the leaders who provide guidance to a movement. They prevent it from becoming a desperate, unruly collection of people. A movement can degenerate into a mob if it does not have a leader or a group of leaders guiding it.

The importance of leadership does not necessarily mean that it is all pervading, that people have no independent role to play and they are manipulated by the leaders. On the contrary, the leadership is expected to reflect the views of the people. Just as we have seen earlier that social movements arise when there is a concrete problem and when people become aware of it. Similarly, a leader is able to visualise this problem. The person does not necessarily create it. The most important aspect of leadership is that it tries to articulate the views of the participants. It is impossible for all people to give their views simultaneously. This would result in chaos. The leader tries to present these views in an organised manner.

At the same time the leadership of a movement also tries to impress its own views on the people. The leader has ideas about the movement, the shape it will take and the nature of its demands. Leadership therefore involves a two-way process. On the one hand the leader tries to lead according to his understanding of the situation and the issues involved. On the other hand the leader incorporates the views and ideas of the participants and articulates them in the process. Both aspects must be present to ensure a stable leadership of a movement. If a leader only tries to impose his or her own views without taking into account the views of the participants the movement is likely to degenerate. A similar situation will occur if the leadership solely relies on the diverse views of the participants without enunciating its own.

We can therefore see that leadership is necessary for helping to develop and shape a social movement. The objectives of a social movement arise out of the problems the people are facing. In the case of the reservation movements both pro and anti) it would mean greater seats for that section of the people. For the women's movement it would mean greater freedom and less oppressive social restrictions. At the same time, how the participants attempt to achieve the stated objectives will be largely determined by the leadership the movement can throw up. We can thus find that social movements with common objectives adopt different strategies for achieving their goals.

35.5.2 Ideology

Apart from the role of the leader another important factor in determining the nature of a social movement is ideology. There are other important aspects of a movement, which are determined by its ideology. Let us look at this aspect in greater detail.

In very rare cases are people attracted to a movement because of a promise for better facilities. There is something deeper, which makes people committed to it. People do not join a movement because they take a fancy to a leader. Normally they follow the leader because of what he represents, i.e., the ideas that he places before the people. People can be lured by promises of better physical facilities and opportunities for social life only for a short time. They however need something more to sustain their interest in the movement. This is where ideology plays a role in sustaining the movement.

What exactly do we mean by ideology? Ideology very simply denotes a set of related beliefs held by a group of people. It helps in understanding a situation. Further it legitimises actions pursued by the people. Therefore, just as a leader is important for guiding a movement, an ideology is also important as it makes

people understand and justify the implications of their actions. One can rarely conceive of a social movement without an ideology.

Let us try and illustrate the above with some examples. When women perceive the problem of sexual inequality in society they organise a social movement which attempts to fight against the problems which are there. What form does this collective action take? This depends on how the problems are perceived. Will the problem of sexual inequality be looked upon as a male, female problem where the solution lies in an attack on the menfolk? Or will it be seen as a problem inherent in the social values and hence the solution lies in changing these values. Like these, there can be other interpretations of the same problem. The actions taken for achieving the goals will also be diverse. For some the use of violent means may be regarded as a corrupting force. Others may believe that they are necessary means. These types of diversities, which are found in social movements, both in identifying the problem and in the means to attain the goals, are determined by ideology. Ideology therefore indicates the goals, means and forms of practical activities of social groups and of individuals. It supplies the justification for various social, political and moral ideals.

We can often see that social movements having the same goals may adopt different means to attain them. Both the Naxalite movement and the *Bhoodan* movement had the same goal of helping to overcome the problems of the rural poor. The *Bhoodan* movement adopted a peaceful, non-violent approach. It sought to distribute land to the poor by appealing to the rich landowners to donate their surplus land to the rural poor. The Naxalite movement on the other hand adopted more forceful means. It believed that the landlords were the enemies of the poor. Hence the only way to help the poor would be to eliminate their enemies. Both movements justified their actions. Therefore we can see that ideology distinguishes one social movement from one another, even though the goals of both may be similar.

We can take another example to illustrate the above point. The movement for preservation of the ecology has taken different paths. The aim of these different movements is the same: preservation of the natural environment. However there are differences on how environment should be preserved. Sundarlal Bahuguna is leading a social movement, which has become internationally renowned. His emphasis is on protection of trees in the hilly regions. The *Chipko* movement, as it is called, has been effective in preventing felling of trees in the Gharwal region of Uttar Pradesh. This movement also believes that if the environment is to be preserved, growth of industries must be checked, industrialisation will destroy the environment, and subsequently, the local population. On the other hand there is another movement in the same region based on the same goal of preserving the forests, led by Chandi Prasad Bhatt. The means are somewhat different from those of the *Chipko* movement. Bhatt's movement believes that small industries should be allowed in this region to provide employment to the people. The existence of forests is necessary, this movement asserts, but if forest related employment is not available the people may be forced to cut down trees to earn their livelihood. This movement views industrialisation as a form of modernisation but it has to be regulated. The *Chipko* movement has a different view on this matter. The divergence in the two movements is not based on scientific analysis, though both use scientific data to prove their respective stands. Ideology plays an important part in

determining these actions and in analysing the situation. Bhatt's movement believes that industrialisation is a form of progress whereas Bahuguna's movement has different views on this. Both justify their approaches on ideological basis.

Apart from helping to distinguish one movement from another, ideology helps to sustain a movement. It distinguishes a social movement from mere instances. People can be mobilised when they feel that they are being deprived. However in order to carry on the movement they need some justification for their actions. The Kshatriya movement began when the Rajbanshis felt that they were being treated as inferiors. But in order to sustain the movement they needed the belief that they were in fact originally from an upper caste.

We can therefore see that ideology is an important component of a social movement. It conceives a movement, sustains it and offers solutions. Both leadership and ideology are indispensable as leaders operate within the ideological framework.

Activity 2

Read in detail about any one of the following social movements.

- 1) Chipko Movement
- 2) Sarvodaya Movement
- 3) Yadav Movement
- 4) Bhoodan Movement

Write a note of not more than two pages on nature of the movement, root cause for its emergence, ideology and leadership. Compare, if possible, your note with those written by other students at your Study Centre.

35.6 LIFE CYCLE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

After having described the crucial role played by leadership and ideology in social movements, let us now state the stages through which generally a social movement passes through.

Stage one reflects the social unrest present in a society. Almost all social movements are rooted in social unrest and problem. Collective tension builds up as a result of this. This stage is followed by stage two in which collective excitement can be witnessed in the society, where people feel they have a problem in common. Certain social conditions are identified as the root cause of the misery and excitement sets in. The movement gains support and a guiding ideology. Agitations rise everywhere. This period is generally brief and leads quickly to action.

Stage three is the formalisation stage through some movements, like migratory movements, may be able to operate without formal organisation. In this stage, a chain of officers is drawn up. There is division of labour among leaders and the followers. Fund raising is systematised and ideology becomes clearer than before. The leaders clarify the ideology in that they remind people of the discontent they share in common, identify their opponents and state the

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objectives of the movement. The strategy and tactics for protest and for action are drawn and a moral justification for having adopted a particular course of action is established.

The fourth stage is one of institutionalisation. The movement crystallises into a definite pattern. Efficient bureaucrats replace agitators; buildings, offices are established. The aims of the movement become accepted in that society. This period may last indefinitely. The fifth stage is one of dissolution. Different movements come to different ends at different points of time: some movements end early while some dissolve after the objective has been achieved. Sometimes differences of opinion among the leaders within a movement may lead to divisions within a movement, with each group having its own ideology and programme of action. Only some movements achieve full institutionalisation.

It is not necessary that all movements pass through all these above mentioned stages. But what can be certainly said about all social movements are:

- a) they play a major part in social change,
- b) they help in quickening the pace of change, and
- c) they influence many aspects of the peoples lives: moral, political, social, and cultural.

In India social movements have tried to change certain aspects of the traditional value system though they have not always been successful in doing so.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) What are the three factors associated with the emergence of social movements? Use two lines for your answer.

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- ii) State whether the following statements are true or false. Mark a T for true or F for false against each statement.

- a) Structural strain is caused when the norms and values of a society disappear suddenly.
- b) The leadership of a social movement plays an important role in achieving its objectives.
- c) Ideology gives always a political slant to a movement.
- d) Ideology helps in distinguishing between movements with similar objectives.

- iii) Identify the name of the movement with which each of the following leaders is associated.

- a) Vinoba Bhave
- b) Charu Mazumdar
- c) Sri Narayana Guru
- d) Sunderlal Bahuguna

iv) List the stages through which a social movement is generally seen to pass. Answer in about four lines.

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35.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we looked at an important component of collective behaviour and social change in India, namely social movements. We began the unit by pointing out the link between social change and social movements. We said social movements are one of the internal forces, which contribute to change in a society. We then moved on to describe the nature of social movements. We first defined a social movement as a collective attempt to promote or resist change. We elaborated the definition with the help of examples. We then moved on to types of social movements. Here we talked of migratory, reformative, revolutionary and reactionary movements. We then stated the functions of a social movement namely mobilisation, pressurisation and clarification of collective consciousness. In our discussion of origins of social movements we focused on three factors associated with the emergence of social movements. The three factors are relative deprivation, structural strain and revitalisation. In the section on origins we also stated why it is important to understand the origins. We said that examining origins helps us to locate which factors predominate and shows us how a movement takes a particular shape. We then moved on to discuss the role of ideology and leadership in stimulating as well as sustaining a movement. Finally, we stated the stages through which a social movement is seen to generally pass.

35.8 KEYWORDS

Ideology	A set of related beliefs held by a group of people
Obscurantist Values	Values, which are, opposed to inquiry, reform or new knowledge i.e. values, which have become redundant with time
Relative Deprivation	A feeling or a state of being deprived in relation to certain conditions and expectations
Revitalisation	Restrengthening
Structural Strain	The strain experienced in a society because the prevailing values and norms do not meet the aspirations of the people.

35.9 FURTHER READING

Kumar, A. 2001. *Social Transformation in Modern India*. Sarup: New Delhi

Rao, M.S.A. 1979. *Social Movements and Social Transformation: A Study of Two Backward Classes Movements in India*. Macmillan: Madras.

Shah, Ganshyam (ed.) 2002. *Social Movements and the State*. Sage Publications: New Delhi

Wilson, John 1973. *Introduction to Social Movements*. Basic Books: New York.

35.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) A social movement is a collective effort by people of a society to promote or resist change.
- ii) a and d
- iii) a) F b) T c) T
- iv) a) CR b) CR c) CP d) CP e) CP f) CP

Check Your Progress 2

- i) The three factors associated with the emergence of social movements are relative deprivation structural strain and revitalisation.
- ii) a) F b) T c) F d) T
- iii) a) *Bhoodan* Movement
b) Naxalite Movement
c) SINDP Movement
d) *Chipko* Movement
- iv) The stages are:
 - a) Social unrest
 - b) Collective excitement
 - c) Formalisation
 - d) Institutionalisation
 - e) Dissolution.