Social Movementsin India: A Review

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Abstract:

A group of people working together for a common political, social or cultural goal is called as movement. It can focus on an injustice, an opportunity for change or even a promotion of a theory or concept. The movements require one key element to be transformed from an idea of a few to an idea of many. A movement can be called as a social movement when it requires a collective power beyond small group organizing to build and sustain a long term goal of change for an issue. Social movements are present in every society and culture. A systematic and scientific study of social movements in a sociological framework has been of a very recent origin. The history of India abounds with a number of social movements. Social movements are vast coalitions of people united by a common interest in social change. Social movements can defend a particular social reform, but they can also organize themselves to resist a social change that another organization advocates. This paper brings the importance of social movements in India along with the level of denial at different classes of people and the system. It also highlights the relative deprivation and remedies.

Keywords: *Culture, Movement, Relative Deprivation, Remedy, Society*

I. Introduction:

Social Movement:

Social movements mobilize members to seek redressal of a struggle for specific goals and objectives. Only a particular section of a population evident themselves in a part of the society. Social movements refer to a continuous collective action over a long period of time. Social movements generally results in change. The Indian society is surrounded by caste, race, religion, languages, regions etc… and has resulted in stratification which resulted in social and economic disparities. In India norms are rigid with respect to inter-group ties, marriage, religious and ritual practises. In India social movements rose against institutional and cultural aspects in the earlier era. The initiatives of social movements are focused on the goal of restoring society.

Heberle (1951) highlights that, "the main criterion of a social movement is to bring fundamental changes in the social order". He also observes that a social movement is "a collective attempt to reach a visualized goal, especially a change in certain social institutions". Wilson (1973) says that a social movement is, "a conscious, collective, organized attempt to bring about or resist large scale change in the social order by non-constitutionalized means". Rao (1978) defines a social movement as, "an organized attempt on the part of a section of society to bring about either partial or total change in society through collective mobilization based on an ideology". The social movements in India which are most immediately identified are linked to the political parties. Then there is a syndicate, a youth union and a women's organization connected to each one of the three Communist Party Parties. However, this trend is also prevalent for other parties, particularly those whose position in state and not central politics may be more dominant (Raina, 2004).Oommen (2011) highlights the history and popular approaches to the study of social movements. He goes on to rectify the general misconception that analyses of collective actions were totally absent in classical sociology by putting forward the incipient explanations of collective actions embedded in the works of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx.There are no two opinions regarding the important role played by relative deprivation in the emergence of social movements.

Thus, a social movement is a large movement, where individuals are working together to encourage change or to combat change. The main concept of all social movements is that people participate in the ebb and flow of life and in social change as observers or as passive participants. People want to become constructive players by

influencing the direction of history. They initiate or become a part of collective action to make a change in the world in which they live. Individuals are consciously responsible in a group endeavour.

Relative Deprivation:
        "A negative discrepancy between legitimate expectation and actuality" is known as relative deprivation (Aberle). Gurr (1979) defined relative deprivation as a gap between expectations and perceived capabilities, over three general sets of values: economic conditions, political power and social status". The concept of relative deprivation is basically one of feeling. This feeling of discontent is not over how little one has, but it is over how much more the other person has. In other words, deprivation occurs in relation to a particular point of reference, often 'reference groups', and it is with reference to those reference groups, that deprivations are perceived. A group which accepts another group as a reference group is called a protest group. Had there been no inequality in terms of class, status, power and other matters, there would not have been any feeling of resentment,

dissatisfaction and anger between the reference group and the protest group.
        It is this feeling of inequality and relative deprivation which haunts and pinches the mind of the depressed sections of the social inequality. This deprived class of people protest against the social inequality, and their reduction to the status of minority group by the dominant group, whom we call the reference group. The protest group, wants to snatch from the reference group, what they think is rightfully theirs, and from which they have been deprived of since centuries. The reference group, on the other hand, wants to resist such a move on the part of the protest group and maintain status quo. Being at the acme of the social ladder, they want to continue there. This sets in a perpetual tussle between the protest group and the reference group. Both the groups have contradictory goals and thus they pull in opposite directions. When the protest group challenges the monopoly of the reference group over economic, educational, religious and political spheres, and the reference group tries to check the same, the reference group turns into opposition group.

II.   Review of literature:

The social movements can be classified into the several types on the basis of the socio-economic characteristics of the participants and the issues involved. To mention few are as follows;

- *Peasant Movements*
- *Tribal Movements*
- *Dalit Movements*
- *Backward Caste Movements*
- *Women's Movements*

- *Industrial Working Class Movements*
- *Students' Movements*
- *Middle Class Movements*
- *Human Rights*
- *Environmental Movements*

        These movements are based on few issues, social and economic groups. The core participants of these movements in the contemporary times comes from the middle class, they primarily raise the issues affecting the deprived classes and communities. Peasant movements in India are generally classified on the basis of periods into pre-British, colonial and post-independence. The post-independence period is classified by some scholars into pre-Naxalbari and post-Naxalbari periods, or pre- and post-green revolution periods (Desai 1986).Dipankar Gupta (2002), in his study on farmers' movements, shows that 'the thesis thatpeasants are incapable of thinking ideologically, and require leadership from outsidestands disproved quite abundantly by the instances from Maharashtra and West UP.Dhanagare, D. N. (2015) uses the historical and theoretical forerunners of rural populism and the heritage of colonial and post - colonial peasant movements as a background for understanding contemporary farmers' movements in

India. His work is an up – to - date and wide ranging history on farmer's movements in India.
        Some of the social movements in India form 1970's to 2020 are as follows:
        *NamantaranAndolan(1978):*The Dalit movement altered the name of Marathwada University of Aurangabad and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. In 1994, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University's name was adopted as 'a compromise,' a 16-year-old effort. Many riots, among them assassinations, annoyances, burning houses, etc. There were dreadful implications for the movement.
        *Narmada AndolanBachao(1985):*At order to convey their opinion about numerous dams along the Narmada river many Adivas, communities and environment activists and human rights defenders gathered in this event. The movement included people and started hunger strikes to show solidarity. The verdict was pending, but the court initially decided that the result was favorable to Andolan, and so stopped work on the dam immediately and

ordered the States concerned to complete the rehabilitation and replacement procedure in the first place. The court then permitted the structure to remain.

*Anti-mandal turmoil(1990):*In August 1990, students from all over India protested the 27% quota for other backward classes in government employment. VP Singh prompted the government to follow the 1980 Mandal Commission recommendations to the government. While it originated in the University of Delhi, the protest has extended worldwide to different educational institutions that have led to violent protests in several parts of the country. Students in many places boycotted testing. Singh rejects its Janata Dal government from the Bharatiya Janata Party, on 7 November 1990. This turmoil comes to pass (BJP).

*Protest against reservation (2006):*It was a second big scream against the reservations system. In 2006, major demonstrations in schools were taking place against the legislative decision of the government of the United Progressive Alliance in both public and private institutions to impose quotas for the OBCs. Students and doctors from the lowest castes regarded this approach as racist. The OBC Student Gruppen Resolution was supported by counter-protests.

*Jan Lokpal Bill-Anti-Corruption Movement(2011):*On 5 April 2011 Anna Hzare started a hunger strike in New Delhi, Jantar Mantar, and the entire nation was united and kept by him. The movement brought about the resignation of the ministerial panel for the review of the draft Jan Lokpal Province of Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar. The program draws many people together and has been a one of a kind event over many decades. It was one of those spectacular events which demonstrated what was possible when the world's biggest democracy took power.

*Movement of Nirbhaya(2012):*The 2012 Delhi Gang Rape was one of the strong reactions from individuals who clearly declared that they had enough. Thousands of people protested on the streets around the country after the occurrence. In social presses, as well, the campaign turned people into black dots, and tens of millions signed a petition to protest the occurrence. The campaign also produced a reaction. In light of the campaign, the federal government and numerous States declared different measures for the safety of women.

*University of JadavpurProtest(2014):*Demonstrations of students in the administrative building requested an investigation on the harassment of a female campus student on 16 September 2014. Students went on hunger strike, and in the early hours of Sept. 17 there was an upsurge of demonstrations among police violence. The end was nearly 100 students who refused to take the call and the VC was torched. Student unity demonstrations began in India. In India. After four months of continuing protest, the VC Abhijit Chakrabarti resigned in January 2015.

*FTII Shake (2015):*Upon Gajendra Chauhan's election in June 2015 as Chairperson, students viewed him as an issue because Chauhan not only lacked the necessary qualifications but also had 20 years' hardliner right. Students protested the designation by demonstrating in places such as Delhi, which resulted in confrontations between students and the police, in an indefinite strike. Directors Anand Patwardhan and Diwakar Banerjee also awarded their national honors in solidarity with the students of FTII. After more than 150 days of agitation, the students halted their demonstration.

*JNU Campaign(2016):*Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) erupted on 9 February 2016 in protests against the murder of Afzal Guru in 2013 and the Kashmiri Secretary allegedly involved in an assault against parliament 16 years ago. Many human rights members believed they were defective. During the event there were battles between different groups of students. The Delhi Police arrested JNU Union President Kahhiya Kumar for sedition four days after the incident. Two additional students, including Umar Khalid, were eventually arrested. The JNU administration carried out an inquiry and action against 21 students. They ranged between household maintenance and fines. In response, the students have waged an indefinite strike. The Delhi High Court ended university acts provided that the protest was ended.

*Protests against Jallikattu(2017):*The Supreme Court prohibited traditional bull-taming Jallikattu after years of claims of animal cruelty from PETA. The Tamil Nadu inhabitants were not forced to acknowledge the ban. The protestors stated that sport is at the heart of their cultural identity. The demonstration got violent when the police tried to expel demonstrators. Around 2000 people came on the streets near Chennai's Marina Beach to symbolize solidarity.The Tamil Nadu government approved Jallikattu on January 23 and adopted a bill amending the Animal Cruelty Prevention Act, 1960.

Movement of Metoo(2018): India's #MeToo campaign spread. Driven by the global sexual harassment movement, men's wrongdoing in positions of power were opened up worldwide by women. In October, she was filmed alongside actor Tanushree Dutta, who accused actor Nana Patekar of sexual harassment in the 2008 movie "Horn Ok

Please."The next items were posts of other women who shared their world experience. Female professionals in the workplace have called for terrible conduct, from entertainers, movie producers, advertising guns, authors, writers and politicians.

*Protest CAA, NRC (2019):*The NRC is an Indian citizen's registry which is necessary by 2003 to modify the 1955 Citizenship Act. In order to recognize and remove illegal migrants, the purpose is to register all legitimate Indian residents. It was launched for the State of Assam in 2013–2014. The government of India will introduce it in 2021 for the remainder of the country.While pro-neoliberal ideology sees immigration as a path from poverty and progress, Delgado andVeltmeyer (2016)They stress the best prospects for these classes to enhance their livelihoods in the working class struggle to capitalist expropriation and exploitation. In this argumentand they deal with the underpinning political and economic dynamism of dispossession and migration,

Broadly speaking, there are two alternatives open to the depressed sections of the society to meet the challenges facing them and make a better living. The first alternative is to accept their low position and beg humbly and request the dominant group to allow them to have access to means of development and come up in life, only to serve them better and make them more prosperous and happy. The dominant group, out of generosity, sympathy, compassion and pity grants them certain benefits and rewards for their 'good conduct'. The second alternative open to the depressed class, is to protest against the inequality and challenge their status of deprivation and claim what they feel is rightfully theirs and which has been defined to them. This stance of the depressed class, implies opposition, confrontation and conflict with the dominant groups. Rao is of the opinion that most of the social movements among the depressed and downtrodden classes have taken up the protest ideology, rather than the former, that is, acquiescent ideology in their claim for a better and respectable standard of living. It is through protest and challenge and not through acquiescence or imitation that the protest group tries to acquire the goods, services, beliefs, rituals and values which were denied to them for centuries.Such protest groups can be arranged on a continuum. They are;

(a) Passive groups.
(b) Moderate groups.
(c) Militant groups.

The passive protest groups are content only in voicing their displeasure, discontentment and dissatisfaction at the existing state of things. But, the militant protest groups take up violent activities and are prepared even to shed their blood if the situation demands, to bring about a radical change in the existing social structure. The moderate protest groups are neither as cold as the passive groups, nor are they as violent as the militant groups. They constitute a via-media between the two extremes.

The extent of the feeling of relative deprivation depends upon the position of the protest group in the social structure of the society. The higher the position of the protest group in the social hierarchy, the greater is the feeling of relative deprivation, and the more is the likelihood of it being involved in social movements. The feeling of relative deprivation is more in a protest group which has a higher ranking in the social ladder, because, it is this group which feels that it is in no way inferior to the dominant group, and still it has been denied economic well being, political power and social status. The people of this group are of the feeling that they are equally entitled to all the rights and privileges which are enjoyed by the people of the dominant group. It is the people of this section of the society, who perceive imminent chances of achieving their desired goal. As it is these people who feel that they are so near to their desired goal, but still so far in terms of the existing state of things, their sense of relative deprivation is much more acute than those who occupy the lower rungs of the social hierarchy. On the other hand, the people who occupy the lowest rungs of the social ladder, come to accept the existing state of inequality and deprivation, as they do not see any chance of improving their economic well being, political power and social status, in the near future. They compromise with the existing state of things, accepting that when the condition of the people of their immediate higher rankings itself is deplorable and oppressive; they can do nothing to change the existing social order. Hence, their sense of relative deprivation is much less compared to the people who occupy the higher rungs of the social ladder, but still far from the top. It is such people who suffer from an acute sense of relative deprivation who come forward to lead the movements, and demand those things, which have been the monopoly of the dominant groups. These people try to inspire and motive the people who occupy positions lower to theirs in the social stratification, and mobilize the public opinion to join the movement. The most exploited and depressed class of people respond to the appeals of the people of their immediate higher ranking and follow them. This is because; they now find an outlet to their suppressed feelings, and hidden aspirations. The

leaders act as mouthpiece to the inner feelings and emotions of the most downtrodden and depressed sections of the society. The leaders realise that their welfare is also involved in this struggle as opportunities for realizing their high aspirations are always better for those who are not in the lowest stratum of the society.

Relative deprivation may work at two distinct levels; personal level and group level. The socialized individual seeks satisfaction of his wants and needs in the social order in which he lives. He looks to it for guidance as to what ends he should seek and what means he should adopt and employ for the realization of these ends. If the society fails to fulfil and satisfy his needs and to provide him a stable framework for the same, he protests against and challenges the social order. Relative deprivations at the personal level are not of much consequence, as they do not affect the society in any large measure, and they are highly subjective and individualistic. Here, we are not concerned with such type of personal deprivation as relative deprivation at individual level does not give rise to any social movement. A social movement may develop. If the discontentment and dissatisfaction is shared by, and communicated to others in the society. So we are primarily concerned with the deprivations experienced by a group or category of people collectively. However, not only just a group of collectively is responsible all by itself for the emergence of a social movement. The group or collectively should be in a position to mobilize public opinion to bring about social change.

Deprivation and discrimination may be seen both at the level of objective social conditions and also at the subjective view point of a group. Objective social conditions may be seen in terms of differential rights and obligations and allocations of benefits and resources to the group. The subjective view point of a group may be gauged by the values and norms that are attached to positions and actions, the degree of awareness of deprivation and perception of their capabilities by the members of the group who aspire for and achieve them. Isaacs (1964) observes "the caste name itself was usually used by the caste Hindu as a derogatory expletive, 'chamar is a word carrying contempt'. So are the words Dhorimala, Madiga, a for someone to call by these names was to call a bad name. The upper caste people used these names to insult the untouchables. Thus, the caste name itself became the common term of contempt and shame whenever it was used by others.

The untouchables think that they are morally and mentally weak and their function is only to obey and accept the commands of the superior castes and serve and keep them comfortable and happy. "The principles of purity and pollution that are attached to these animals and plants are the same as those that are attached to different segments of Hindu society" (Rajendra Sing, 1978). The culture of inequality has become a way of life for the people of these depressed classes. They accept this state of inequality as natural as the air they breathe. The notion of relative deprivation necessarily involves reference groups, because, it is with reference to these groups that the deprivations are perceived. In the absence of these reference groups, the question of relative deprivation does not arise at all. The depressed classes emulate the ways and means, the values and norms, the style of living and adopt the privileged customs of the reference a groups not out of any acquiescence of the superiority of the reference groups, but out of challenge and protest against those things from which they have been deprived of. They challenge the monopoly of the superior castes, in the use of norms and values, various types of goods and services, and way of living. The reference groups, in order to resist such a move. Thus reference groups are turned into opposition groups. Aggression, protest and challenge rather than acquiescence or imitation marks the spirit of the depressed classes in acquiring those goods, service, beliefs, rituals, values and norms which were denied to them for centuries. Such depressed classes become the protest groups.

Morrison (1974) has said that the basic notion of relative deprivation needs elaboration in two important ways. The desires and goals involved must be: (1) Legitimate expectations; (2) These expectations must be perceived as locked. In relative deprivation theory, a person not only desires a goal, but he also feels that he has a 'right' to obtain that goal and that he 'deserves' it, at least under certain conditions. This, in fact, is the socio-psychological definition of 'deprivation'. If one expects something and thinks that he will get it, he does not feel deprived of it.

However, relative deprivation has a time dimension. As long as there is a hope that their legitimized goals will be fulfilled in the near future, they are prepared to stand and wait for them. But, a social movement emerges only when the depressed class does not fore-see any chance of fulfilling its goals even in the long run. Relative deprivation does not refer to a state of envy or dissatisfaction with one's lot unless contained therein is a sentiment or feeling that the inequality is also inequitable. Runciman (1978) has distinguished three types of

relative deprivations based upon Weber's concepts of class, status and power.

Class: In the class structure relative deprivation is felt and experienced in terms of income, wealth, opportunities for occupational advancement, working conditions and so on. In short, deprivation is associated with the system of production.

Status: Relative deprivation is perceived in terms of status with regard to social position, the way of living, and other related matters. In terms of status relative deprivation is felt and experience through social estimation and prestige. Deprivation, here refers to life styles such as patterns of consumption, religious practices and inter-personal behaviour as well as ascriptive criteria such as race, age and sex.

Power: Power has been defined as the ability to carry out one's will in the face of opposition. The people of the depressed sections do not have any power. In other words, relative deprivation is felt in terms of an ability to exercise one's will independently of the opposition of others. Differences in power exist in all imperatively co-ordinated associations and where they are not legitimated universally, are likely to give rise to feelings of relative deprivation.

The extent of relative deprivation experienced by the depressed sections in India can be noted by a glance at the religious and secular disabilities experienced by them. On the religious side, they were not allowed to study the sacred scriptures and chant the Vedas, nor were they allowed to enter the temples of the Hindus. From the secular point of view, the touch of a non-Hindu was considered as defiling by the Hindus. The non-Hindus were not allowed to use the tanks and wells used by the caste Hindus. Extreme forms of discrimination existed in Kerala, where there was in vogue not only touch pollution, but also distance pollution. There were also some tribes whose mere sight polluted the Nambutiries. Rao (1979) commenting on the condition of the untouchables in India, Isaacs (1964) writes, "in many places they could not enter into streets or lanes used by caste Hindus, or else they had to carry brooms to brush away their footprints in the dirt behind them as they passed. In some places they could not contaminate the earth with their spittle, but had to carry little pots around their necks to keep the ground reserved for caste Hindu spittle only. The untouchables were also made unseeable, unapproachable and unhearable the sound of his voice falling on a caste Hindu's ear was deemed to be as polluting as his touch". The untouchables were forbidden to build houses made of bricks. They were not allowed to wear ornaments. They were obliged not to cover their breasts. Any

violation from these customary norms of behaviour was met with very serve forms of punishment which ranged from decapitation (beheading) to mutilation.

Thus the scheduled castes suffered from intense forms of relative deprivation in the fields of religion, education, economy and politics. They were discriminated against, in the dress they wore, in the speech they spoke, in the houses they built, in the way they carried out themselves, and in the manner in which they interacted with the privileged. The privileged class zealously guarded their position and privilege, and brutally punished those who violated the customary laws and posed a threat to their monopolistic position.

The advent of the British in India marks the beginning of an altogether different way of looking towards their position of derivation and exploitation. The Brahmins and the upper non-Brahmin castes enjoyed a position of monopoly in religious, secular, economic, educational and other related fields for a long period as there was no one to challenge them. Their exploitation of the scheduled castes and other depressed classes went on for centuries unceasingly. But, with the advent of the British in India, these privileged classes had to face their equals, if not superiors. Thus, a struggle ensured between the privileged Hindus and the British. It was such a situation that the depressed classes were waiting for, so that they could raise their heads and tell the privileged classes, that what they were doing was wrong, and they would no more take it lying down. They needed the support of someone to stand the onslaught of oppression and exploitation. This very much needed support was lent by the British. However, it would be wrong to say that the non-privileged class rose up spontaneously against their position of deprivation when they found the British face to face with the privileged Hindus. The British, on their part tried to provide an outlet to the anguished emotions and feelings of disgust of the weaker sections. They awake in, and made them aware of their degraded position. It was this double-edged attack, by the depressed classes on the one hand and the British on the other, on the citadel of the privileged classes which set in motion the crumbling of their unchallenged supremacy. Until the beginning of the 19th century, the scheduled castes largely accepted their lot meekly. Some insignificant few rebelled against their helplessness, but the vast majority of them believed that their real chances lay in obedience and hard work as there was some reward for those 'virtues'. Rao (1978) observes "while most princely states adopted a conservative policy, the British Administration generally followed a liberal policy towards the

backward classes. The British introduced a new ideology of liberal and egalitarian values, which were reflected in their educational, legal and political institutions. The British Raj opened new avenues of mobility not based on the hereditary system of allocation of resources and privileges. Furthermore, the British pursued a policy of social welfare with regard to the depressed classes, and gave preference to employing the depressed classes in the lower posts of public service". The British supported these weaker sections in their struggle against the Brahmins and the upper non-Brahmin castes for a better and respectable living.

III.   Conclusion:

India's struggle for independence, the spread of liberal ideas due to the impact of westernization and industrialization and reform movements such as Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Bhakti cult and Sufism added fuel to the fire. They acted as catalysts in the mass upsurge of the depressed classes against their ill-treatment at the hands of Brahmins and other upper non-Brahmin castes. The Indian National Congress supported the cause of the backward classes in many ways. The national movement rejected the ideology of hierarchy and advocated an ideology of equality. The reform movements being liberal, were against many orthodox brahmanical practices such as sati, prohibition of widow remarriage, the absence of a provision for divorce, the custom of child marriages, including their attitude towards the untouchables. All these developments coupled with the ideas brought forth by westernization and industrialization provided a favourable climate for the emergence of social movements. The scene completely changed, with the spread of liberal ideas and alternate sources of legitimacy. The depressed classes began to organize themselves in different parts of India to fight against the longstanding discrimination and dehumanised living from which they suffered.

Given its multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multiplicity in politics, the astonishing variety and diversity of social movements shouldn't be surprising in the region. After all, social movements must necessarily and firmly be integrated into a nation's social, cultural and political reality. While describing the movements is a question of collecting facts and systematically presenting such material, analyzing the integration and connection of movements with broader socio-political processes, especially for the Indian Region, is a very long and tough effort. However, it could be stated here that a position of relative deprivation is not the only factor which gives rise to social movements. This state of relative deprivation is very much a necessary condition, but not a sufficient cause. A sufficient level of understanding and reflection is necessary on the part of the participants and they must be able to observe and perceive the contrast that exists between the privileged and the deprived in socio-cultural spheres and they must realize that it is possible to do something about it. This can pave the way for the emergence of a social movement. A social movement will lead to, or change itself into a mutiny in the society.

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