

## **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND PROGRESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Social movements are key players in pushing for societal change and advancement. These movements are made up of large collectives or groups committed to tackling specific issues related to politics or society. Communities that have been pushed to the fringes, such as farmers, indigenous groups, Dalits, lower castes, youth, and women, have come together to fight against injustices, discrimination, and scarcity of resources. The United States boasts a deep history of social movements that have brought about significant shifts in advancing social change and progress. These movements have varied in nature, ranging from labor issues, civil rights, Black nationalism, resistance to globalization, environmental protection, and more. The French Revolution in the 1700s stands as a key example of a movement that not only transformed France but also had a deep impact on Europe and beyond.

In the 1800s, labor movements in Europe were shaped by Marxist ideas, focusing on the conflict between social classes. The unification of Germany in 1990 and the breakup of the Soviet Union were critical moments in European history that aided in its growth. Likewise, India has experienced a wide array of social movements, including those by the Backward Classes, Nationalists, Dalits, Caste, Youth, Tribes, Farmers, Environmentalists, and Women. It's crucial to acknowledge that the influence of social movements is not straightforwardly quantifiable in terms of success or failure. Some movements succeed in achieving their objectives, while others do not. Failures can arise from severe repression or lack of public interest. A movement may wane if it lacks a strong commitment or fails to secure enough support to realize its goals. Success is more apparent when a movement is acknowledged as having genuine authority.

**KEYWORDS:** Diverse Social Moments, Marxism, Social Moments, Social Change, Social Transformation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Social movements play a crucial role in driving social transformation and progress. Within the field of sociology, particularly in the area of critical sociology, the examination of social movements is of significant importance. Social movements consist of large groups of people or organizations that concentrate on particular political or social issues. These groups may engage in, oppose, or start social change. The term "social movement" describes a range of collective efforts aimed at altering the current social and political framework through both formal and informal methods. On the contrary, development is a term linked to favorable results in the economy.

It encompasses the application of particular economic and technological approaches to optimize resources for the purpose of promoting economic expansion and improving the quality of life for people, from a sociological perspective, development is about achieving social progress in the right direction. Marginalized groups such as farmers, indigenous peoples, Dalits, lower castes, young people, and women have been coming together to challenge inequalities, discrimination, and lack of resources. They have campaigned for economic betterment, access to education, and political representation. This extensive group effort has led to structured social campaigns characterized by distinct beliefs and guiding figures. The purpose of this piece is to delve into the concepts of social campaigns and progress, and to examine the role of social campaigns in fostering progress.

## II. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In essence, the majority of social movements emerge from collective behavior. This means they are the result of people coming together, often without formal rules or procedures, but united by a shared perspective on society. For a movement to take form, it must be ongoing and structured. Movements stand out among other collective behaviors due to their high level of organization and their extended duration. It's important to note that a movement is more than just a group of people gathered; it embodies both organization and spontaneity. Wilkinson (1971) describes a social movement as a conscious collective effort aimed at bringing about change in any way possible, without resorting to violence, illegal activities, revolution, or retreating into a "utopian community."

Key elements of social movements include goals, beliefs, plans, leadership, and how they are organized. Social movements can manifest in various ways, such as protests, demonstrations,

strikes, and riots. However, simply staging protests or demonstrations does not necessarily classify them as social movements. There are lots of ideas and ways to figure out and sort out social movements. For instance, Marxism sees them as conflicts, while Durkheim thinks about how society keeps things in check and what everyone agrees on. Max Weber looks at them from a leadership angle, especially when it comes to how influential leaders can be. The main thing Marxism cares about is the social class and where its members stand in society.

### **III. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE MOVEMENT?**

This view sees fights as the main thing going on in social movements. Karl Marx was mostly interested in getting to the bottom of why and how big changes happen, especially when it's about getting rid of the capitalist system. He believed that these movements emerged from fundamental social and economic relationships that lay the groundwork for societal power structures (Chhaparia, 2022, p. 62). Although conflicts arising from differences in social class can be settled through dialogue and institutional disputes, those stemming from class differences are resolved through conflict and collective action. The structural perspective on social movements highlights the analysis of entrenched injustices and inequalities that are at the heart of contested political battles. This viewpoint connects social movements with the growing aspirations of individuals. The functional perspective suggests that these movements disrupt the smooth functioning of society.

Researchers such as Kornhauser (2008), Tilly and Wood (2013), and Shills (2009) have suggested that mass movements emerge from mass societies, which are characterized by extremism and a lack of democratic values. These scholars advocate for limiting the involvement of the general public in daily political activities, arguing that this interference hampers the government's efficiency. Although Weber (1968) did not specifically outline a theory of social movements, his ideas on social action and charismatic leadership offer insights into his understanding of movements led by charismatic figures. In India, Mahatma Gandhi is credited with initiating a national movement for independence. The Gandhian approach emphasizes the purity of means in social struggles and the resolution of conflicts through nonviolence.

There are lots of ideas that try to make sense of why social movements happen, like the mass movement theory, the resource mobilization theory, the relative deprivation theory, the reference group theory, the political process theory, and the cultural theory. This section will explore some of the key theories in more detail. Mass society theory, developed by Kornhauser

(2008), posits that with the rise of industrialization and subsequent social changes, individuals have become isolated and alienated. A mass society is when a group of powerful people can be easily swayed by regular folks, and at the same time, regular folks, especially those who don't have much power, can easily get involved because they don't really have ties to their own groups, local communities, volunteer organizations, or their jobs.

## IV. PROGRESS

Progress is a wide-ranging idea. The word "progress" suggests an increase, maturity, and improvement. It also encompasses changes in quality. It can be seen as the expansion of knowledge and the control of the environment by humans. On the other hand, "growth" refers to a change in quantity, usually in a specific direction, whereas development involves a change in quality. Development is the journey towards achieving a desired change. For instance, we talk about economic progress, technological progress, and ethical progress. When we talk about moving forward in a process, we often use the word "development" (Pais, 2012, p. 16). Development is like a journey that takes you from where you are to a better place, whether that's growing, improving, changing for the good, or adding new things like physical stuff, money matters, the environment, people, and population changes. The main idea behind development is to make life better and more high-quality. It's about making things bigger or better locally or regionally without hurting the environment.

Development is about moving up from a lower quality of life to a better one. By starting programs to help people without homes, they can eventually own their own homes, which is a big step forward. Similarly, setting up a school in a place that didn't have one before can help fix the problem of not being able to read or write, and over time, it can make the area more educated and have higher reading and writing skills. In the late 1900s, people started to realize that just making money didn't always mean people were living better lives. They saw it was important to focus on certain policies that could help different groups in society get ahead. Over time, experts and researchers made the idea of development better. Sen (1999) came up with the capability approach, which said development was about helping people reach their full potential by giving them the freedom to do things like work, socialize, and take care of their families. This idea was the basis for the Human Development Index (HDI), a way to measure how well countries are doing, created by the UN Development Program (UNDP) in 1990. On the other hand, experts such as Jeffrey Sachs and Paul Collier concentrated on strategies that hinder or suppress progress in different

nations, keeping them trapped in severe poverty for extended periods. These are known as poverty traps, which include civil conflicts, the exploitation of natural resources, and the cycle of poverty itself. Recognizing these traps allows for a better understanding of a country's political, economic, and social situations with the goal of promoting growth.

Jeffrey Sachs places a strong emphasis on sustainable development, which advocates for progress and growth to improve the quality of life for people worldwide by addressing environmental concerns and the needs of future generations (Society for International Development, 2021). Dependency theory is a big idea in how countries grow and develop. Andre Gunder Frank, a well-known supporter of this idea, believes that the time when European countries were colonizing other places helped rich countries get richer while leaving the less fortunate ones behind. It's based on the idea that the wealth levels of rich and poor countries are linked by the worldwide economy. Dependency theory offers a way to look at the big gap between rich and poor countries by seeing it as a result of the past unfair treatment of poorer countries by richer ones. This theory suggests that people in poorer countries used to be better off economically than their kids and grandkids are today.

## **V. MOVEMENTS FOR SOCIAL REFORM AND TRANSFORMATION**

The structure and transformation of society are the two key dynamics at play. The structure of society is upheld through the process of socialization and the mechanisms of social control. Transformation is essential for the smooth operation of society. It is a natural phenomenon, connected to the evolutionary theory that views society as an evolving entity. Every society undergoes transformation, though the pace can vary from slow to fast. Scholars in the field of sociology seek to examine transformation from various angles. Kettering (1961) suggests that society may dislike change, but it is the sole force that has led to societal advancement. The functionalist viewpoint emphasizes the importance of every element within society for its ongoing well-being and sustainability. From this perspective, one might examine the origins of social movements, their persistence, and their societal roles.

Social movements arise due to issues within societal systems, and functionalists note that these movements evolve as their initial objectives are achieved or risk disintegration. Additionally, social movements and societal transformation can be analyzed from a conflict viewpoint, where they are seen as responses to systemic inequality in society. The symbolic interaction approach looks into the everyday interactions of social movements, the significance people assign to their

participation, and the personal experiences of undergoing social change.

## **VI. MOVEMENTS FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

The aim of social movements is to instigate societal transformation. The nature and extent of this transformation differ across various social movements. Social scientists view social movements as attempts to either promote or hinder societal progress. Ideas like evolution, advancement, and growth are linked to societal transformation. Evolution denotes a slow, incremental change, while advancement signifies a shift or progression towards a specific objective. The word "development" suggests growth, maturation, and progress, signifying qualitative shifts. For instance, we talk about societal development when referring to significant changes.

## **VII. DIVERSE SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA**

India has seen a bunch of different social movements, covering everything from Backward Classes, Nationalists, Dalits, Caste, Youth, Tribal, Farmers, Environmental, and Women's rights. Since the early 1900s, Backward Classes, especially those from the south, have been fighting for their place and respect in society. The Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) movement, started by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in Tamil Nadu, turned into political groups like the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led by C.N. Annadurai and the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) started by the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, M. G. Ramachandran (MGR).

These groups are now big players in Tamil Nadu's politics. Thanks to these movements, Tamil Nadu has become a forward-thinking state in India and is known as the most urbanized state among the bigger ones. The Independence Movement is another big deal in India. Mohandas K. Gandhi led three major campaigns in the fight for India's independence: the non-cooperation movement from 1919 to 1922, the civil disobedience movement and the Salt Satyagraha from 1930 to 1931, and the Quit India movement from 1940 to 1942.

This movement was all about being peaceful and included social, economic, and political forms of not cooperating. Even though they faced challenges like cultural, religious, and linguistic differences, widespread poverty, and a lot of social issues, people from all walks of life joined the fight for freedom. As a result, India got its independence on August 15, 1947. Nowadays, India is seen as the biggest democracy in the world, known for its civil liberties, independent judiciary, and free press. The Dalit Movement in India is a struggle aimed at challenging the socio-cultural dominance of the upper castes and establishing a society based on social equality. This movement

has taken various forms and continues to advocate for the rights and dignity of Dalits. The process of Sanskritization, the Adi-Hindu movement, and the shift to different faiths. Dalits pursued conversion with the aim of escaping the stigma of untouchability and improving their social and economic status.

Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism with his vast following in Nagpur in 1956. However, sociologists have noted that these converted Dalits have been elevated to a new caste status. In 1971, Kansiram set up the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and Minorities Employees Welfare Association. By 1981, he launched the Dalit Soshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS4) to combat the harassment faced by activists advocating for caste awareness. In 1984, he founded the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), which came to power in Uttar Pradesh in June 1995 with Mayawati at the helm, serving as the Chief Minister three more times until March 2012. India has witnessed numerous social movements, including the Save Silent Valley Movement (1973), Chipko Movement (1973), JP Movement (1974), Namantar Andolan (1978), Jungle Bachao Andolan (1980s), Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985), and the Jan Lokpal Bill – Anti Corruption Movement by Anna Hazare (2011).

The JP Movement, also known as the Bihar Movement, was a political campaign started by students in Bihar in 1974, led by the renowned Gandhian socialist Jayaprakash Narayan (JP), who fought against corruption and misrule in the state government. This movement also opposed the imposition of an emergency in 1975, which led to its withdrawal in 1977 and the subsequent declaration of a general election. In this election, the Congress suffered a significant defeat, and the Janata Party took over the government. The Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) was a big deal environmental fight that brought together native tribes, farmers, nature lovers, and people fighting for human rights against a huge dam project on the Narmada River in 1985. Medha Patkar, a well-known green warrior, kicked off this battle. Another big fight against corruption was the Indian anti-corruption push, also called Anna Andolan, which started in 2011.

This push was all about making strong laws and making sure they were followed to fight political corruption, with Anna Hazare leading the charge. The goal was to cut down on corruption in the Indian government by pushing for the Jan Lokpal Bill. Also, there was a group led by Ramdev, Kiran Bedi, Arvind Kejriwal, and others trying to get back black money from foreign banks. Back when India was under British rule, a bunch of farmer movements popped up because of the bad economic policies of different British rulers. These policies made farming and traditional crafts suffer, causing big shifts in how people lived and worked in the country. Holding

onto land rights, the issue of too many people on the land, and a rise in financial burdens among the peasant classes in India.

Lately, Indian agricultural workers have rallied against three agricultural reform bills that were enacted by the Indian Parliament in September 2020. Right after the laws were passed, groups of farm workers began setting up local protests, especially in Punjab. After about two months, these groups, mainly from Punjab and Haryana, kicked off a big campaign named Dili Chalo (Let's go to Delhi), with tens of thousands of members from these farm worker unions heading to the country's capital. The Indian government told its police and security teams in different states to face off against the protesters with water cannons, batons, and tear gas, trying to stop the farm worker unions from getting to Haryana first, and then Delhi. The whole thing ended when the Indian government decided to cancel the bills in November 2021.

## VIII. SUMMARY

Collective social movements, aiming to alter societal structures, cannot be simply evaluated based on their outcomes. Some achieve their objectives, while others fall short. Failure may stem from harsh crackdowns or from general indifference. A movement can fade away if it lacks widespread support and fails to gain enough influence to implement its agenda. Success is clearly seen when a movement's legitimacy as a governing force is recognized. In a successful revolution, the movement becomes the new authority and earns respect. Through our analysis of social movements in the United States, Europe, and India, it's clear that these movements have led to significant societal changes, often resulting in progress. This progress can be limited to certain groups or extend to the entire society.

## IX. CONCLUSION

In the modern world, aided by technology, individuals can effortlessly connect with others online via social media platforms. Social media refers to an application or a website designed to enhance communication, interaction, sharing, and collaboration. Whether waiting for a bus, commuting on a subway, or enjoying solitude, many individuals reach for their phones to check social media for updates on messages, intriguing news, and more. This activity consumes a significant amount of time for many. However, before individuals realize it, they have become dependent on social media, a dependency that is rarely discussed in comparison to addictions like drugs or smoking.



This article aims to shed light on how to break free from social media addiction, delve into the reasons behind this addiction, and explore strategies for overcoming it. The research approach combines various case studies to achieve this goal. The objective is to make individuals aware of the origins of online addiction, their feelings of reliance on social media, and the underlying satisfaction they derive from it. Recognizing internet addiction is not daunting; what is concerning is the unawareness and deep-seated addiction that many individuals suffer from, without taking steps to address it or showing any concern over it. This article will first define social media addiction, then discuss the reasons behind its allure, both from an individual's perspective and their surroundings. Lastly, it will offer solutions for overcoming social media addiction.

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