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**Impact of Social Movements on Social Change**

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## Impact of Social Movements on Social Change



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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The study sought to investigate the impact of social movements on social change.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

**Findings:** The study concluded that the society is not a static element. It is a complex system of movements and counter movements pulling it in different directions. When this tussle is finally in favor of the movement, it becomes part of the social structure. A successful movement may become a part of the social order such as a trade union movement or save environment movement. The movement may disappear after achieving its goal.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The study was informed by relative deprivation theory, the strain theory and the theory of revitalization. The study recommended that, successful movements must define their goals clearly and target the institutions that have the power to make the changes they are demanding. Moreover successful movements should act in a political environment in which they have leverage to demand systemic change.

**Keywords:** *Impact, Social Movements, Social Change.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Social movements most often aim to achieve something better for their constituents who are usually among the excluded and powerless in society (Staggenborg, 2016). Their goals could be securing more equitable control over resources, greater representation in local politics, fair access to services and markets or decent working conditions. They see the nature and exercise of power in society as the fundamental obstacle to achieving these goals and tend to organize around ideas that give the movements' constituents new forms of social and poverty reduction and proper growth: the role of empowerment (Simandan, 2020). Working with social movement political identity (Tilly, 2015). The success of the feminist movement, for instance, does not depend just on various forms of political action, but also on the way in which the ideas associated with the movement led women, and ultimately men, to rethink hitherto accepted and largely unchallenged notions about the roles of women in society. Social movements can also question the dominant economic paradigm and its ability to deliver sustainably, the basic tenets of pro-poor growth as defined above. Movements on land rights for women and for marginalized groups in Africa are beginning to challenge the liberalization and privatization policies which lead to increased corporate power, including that of multinational corporations (MNCs), over natural resources, and which have led more recently to a scramble for land for food and energy crop production and speculation, as well as increased competition for access to minerals, petroleum, timber and water (Hwang, 2015)

In recent years, scholars of organizations and social movements have increasingly recognized that these two areas of research would both benefit from greater crossover (Smith, 2013). Organizations are the targets of, actors in, and sites for social movement activities. Social movements are often represented by formal organizations, while organizations resemble episodic "movements" rather than bounded actors (Paschel, 2016). In an increasingly global economy and polity, organizations and movements are growing more transnational. And both movements and organizations are changing their strategies and routines in response to similar social and technological shifts. The same information and communication technologies that enable the management of global supply chains also allow global movement activities: on February 15, 2003, millions of participants marched in over 350 cities on six continents to protest the imminent U.S. invasion of Iraq, marching under the common slogan "The World Says No to War." As forms of coordinated social action, movements and organizations are ships riding the same wave (Archaya, 2017)

Social movement is one of the major forms of collective behavior. The term was first used by Saint-Simon in France at the turn of the eighteenth century, to characterize the movements of social protest that emerged there and later elsewhere, and was applied to new political forces opposed to the status quo (Cushing, 2020). Nowadays, it is used most commonly with reference to groups and organizations outside the mainstream of the political system. These movements, often now abbreviated to NSMs (New Social Movements), have in the latter decades of the twentieth century become an increasingly important source of political change (Abebe, 2021). In the recent years the study of social movements has attracted the attention of a large number of sociologists in Nepal, as well as in West. We hear of various kinds of social movements launched for one or the other purpose. There are movements to demand more and more reservation for the SCs and STs and

other backward classes and there are counter movements demanding its cancellation or at least the status quo. There are movements to “save environment”, to “save world peace “. There are movements for and against the construction of Temple (Tsutsui, 2017).

Since the 19th century, social movements have provided U.S. social work with its intellectual and theoretical foundations and many of its leaders (Shapera, 2021). Social workers were among the founders of the Progressive movement and have played important roles in the labor, feminist, civil rights, welfare rights, and peace movements for over a century. Since the 1960s, social workers have been active in New Social Movements (NSMs), which have focused on issues of identity, self-esteem, human rights, and the development of oppositional critical consciousness, and in international movements that have emerged in response to economic globalization, environmental degradation, and major population shifts, including mass immigration (Valladares, 2021). More recently, they have played a supportive role in the transnational Occupy movement, the Black Lives Matter movement, and movements to establish marriage equality, protect immigrants and refugees, promote the rights of transgender persons, and advocate for environmental justice (Sakamoto, 2018)

Social movements do not necessarily bring solutions to the social problems. They may champion the cause of social problems but cannot always promise a lasting solution (Ratten, 2021). Social movements may promise to bring about social change and they do bring it. But it is not a one way process. Not only do social movements bring about change, but social change sometimes gives birth to movements. Social change often breeds social movements, and movements, in turn, breed additional change. In fact, Smeler has defined a social movement as an organized group effort to generate socio-cultural change (Faist, 2017). Change is the law of nature. What is today shall be different from what it would be tomorrow. The social structure is subject to incessant change. Forty years hence government is due to make important changes. Family and religion will not remain the same during this period because these institutions are changing. Individuals may strive for stability, societies may create the illusion of permanence, the quest for certainty may continue unabated, yet the fact remains that society is an ever changing phenomenon, growing, decaying, renewing and accommodating itself to changing conditions and suffering vast modifications in the course of time.

### **Statement of the Problem**

For over a century, social movements have also significantly influenced the evolution of the social work profession (Day, 2013). They have provided its intellectual and theoretical foundations, its policy goals, and furnished most of its strongest allies and leaders. Many social workers have held leadership positions in national and international social movements (Archmad, 2021). Although fewer social workers play such roles today, social movements continue to shape social work theory and practice in the U.S. and throughout the world (Berger, 2017); (Obregon, 2017). As potential participants in the global social justice movements of the 21st century, social workers can help expose the personal and community consequences of globalization and climate change, and develop viable alternative to existing institutional arrangements. Studies have been done Davis (2008) conducted a study on Social Movements in Organizations and Markets, Sherry (2019),

conducted a study on social movements and social control while Bosi (2018), conducted a study on the process of social change in the post-movement lives of provisional IRA volunteers. All this study provided a conceptual gap as our study will look at impact of social movements on social change.

### **Theoretical Review**

This study will benefit from three main theories concerning the emergence of social movements.

**Relative deprivation theory** - Relative deprivation is a concept which explains that one feels deprived according to gap between expectations and realizations. The person who wants little and has little, feels less deprived than the one who has much but expects still more (Horton & Hunt, 1968).

**The strain theory** - The strain theory of social movement has been propounded by Smelser (1993). This theory considers structural strain as the underlying factor contributing to collective behavior. Structural strain may occur at different levels such as norms, values, mobility, situational facilities, etc. Because of these structural strains some generalized belief that seeks to provide an explanation for the strain, may emerge. Both strain and generalized belief require precipitating factors to trigger off a movement. Smeller's analysis of the genesis of social movements is very much within the structural functional framework.

**The theory of revitalization** - The relative deprivation theory and the strain theory give us impression that social movements necessarily arise out of negative conditions such as deprivations and strain. In this context, Wallace (1956) has asserted that social movements develop out of a deliberate, organized and conscious effort on the part of members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture for themselves.

### **Empirical Review**

Njenga (2021), conducted a study to examine how cultural drivers affect women participation in leadership of Nyeri County cooperatives, Kenya. To examine how social drivers affect women participation in leadership of Nyeri County cooperatives, Kenya. The study used descriptive research design to accomplish its objectives. African feminism and gender and development theories were picked and the target population was 205 women. The study employed purposive sampling and the target members were identified and then a selection of the members done with regard to the study objectives. The study used primary data. The data was collected by use of both semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides. Data analysis was conducted objectively. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was utilized to analyse the collected data. Data analysis employed both quantitative and qualitative analysis; quantitative analysis used both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative analysis on the other hand used content analysis. The findings were the presented with the help of tables, frequencies, and percentages. Pilot test of the measures was conducted against prospective sample population to measure validity and reliability. Test re-test method was used to measure the validity of the research instruments. The research found out that indeed social drivers affect women participation in leadership. Economic drivers were the ones with great effects followed by cultural and then social drivers. The study finally recommended that a similar study should be done in other sub counties so that a

close comparison can be done to understand the same issue in other areas. It also recommended that stakeholders should

Sherry (2019), conducted a study on social movements and social control. The study began by scavenging the literature to conduct an inventory of social-control tactics used by the state against political movements, identifying four loose clusters: policing protest, surveillance, the manipulation of public opinion, and threats to jobs and economic vitality. Moving beyond description to analysis, the study then suggested that a framework can be extended to non-state agents if grounded in the power relationship between agent and target of social control, a relationship that shapes the tactics deployed by the agent against specific targets: activists, employees, residents of economically dependent communities, and the public. The study found out that the majority of social-movement theories focus on the independent variables associated with the emergence of a movement.

Chiroro (2017), conducted a study to trace the origin of Chinkororo among Abagusii in the period 1961-1990, to investigate the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 1991-2002 and to analyze the changing trends in the recruitment training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 2002-2010. The study utilized descriptive research design. Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to select the population sample. One hundred and thirty-six participants were interviewed. The research employs both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was obtained from direct interaction with the respondents in the field through conducting interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data was generated from the critical textual analysis of the books, journals, dissertations, reports and magazines. Archival sources were also consulted. The findings revealed that Chinkororo emerged in the early 1970s due to state security failure, especially along the Gusii-Maasai borders, coupled with negative ethnicity and the rise of Kalenjin warriors and Maasai Morans among the Kipsigis and Maasai respectively. It further establishes that Chinkororo have specific recruitment age, training grounds and an organized hierarchical structure.

Wanyoike (2016), conducted a study to investigate the history, practices and transformation of the Akurinu movement, a religious group that emerged in Kandara sub-County, Murang'a County in Central Kenya in the 1920s. Its emergence was as a response to the socio-economic, political, and religion-cultural conflict caused by British colonial administration and the teachings of western Christian Missionaries in Gikuyu land. The study employed theoretical frameworks of Social Movement and Modernization theories with a view to analyze the group's emergence and the transformational process undertaken. The study covered the period between 1926 and 2000. The study was conducted in Kandara sub-county and covered areas that had large following of the Akurinu under the Kenya Foundation of the Prophets Church. These included Kaguthi, Gathugu, Rwathia as well as Mukurwe and Gacharage. Both secondary and primary data was used. A total of 64 informants both men and women of varying ages were interviewed. Collected data was analyzed through qualitative method, placed under historical interrogation and compared with existing information for authentication purposes. This research established that the emergence of the Akurinu movement was a result of a combination of political, socioeconomic and cultural factors in colonial Kenya. The study also established that this movement had undertaken transformations that have impacted positively to the Akurinu way of life in the larger society.

Kenneth (2015), conducted a study to determine the impact of parental deployment and combat injury on young children's post deployment mental health, injuries, and maltreatment. This is a population-based, retrospective cohort study of young children of active duty military parents during fiscal years (FY) 2006 to 2007, a high deployment period. A total of 487,460 children, 3 to 8 years of age, who received Military Health System care, were included. The relative rates of mental health, injury, and child maltreatment visits of children whose parents deployed and children of combat-injured parents were compared to children unexposed to parental deployment. Of the included children, 58,479 (12%) had a parent deploy, and 5,405 (1%) had a parent injured during deployment. The study found out that relative to children whose parents did not deploy, children of deployed and combat-injured parents, respectively, had additional visits for mental health diagnoses (incidence rate ratio [IRR] = 1.09 [95% CI = 1.02-1.17], IRR = 1.67 [95% CI = 1.47-1.89]), injuries (IRR = 1.07 [95% CI = 1.04-1.09], IRR = 1.24 [95% CI = 1.17-1.32]), and child maltreatment (IRR = 1.21 [95% CI = 1.11-1.32], IRR 2.30 = [95% CI 2.02-2.61]) post deployment. Young children of deployed and combat-injured military parents have more post deployment visits for mental health, injuries, and child maltreatment. Mental health problems, injuries, and maltreatment after a parent's return from deployment are amplified in children of combat-injured parents. Increased preventive and intervention services are needed for young children as parents return from deployments.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

## **RESULTS**

The results were grouped into various research gap categories namely as conceptual, and methodological gap.

### **Research Gaps**

A conceptual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the issue discussed. Kenneth (2015), conducted a study to determine the impact of parental deployment and combat injury on young children's post deployment mental health, injuries, and maltreatment. The study found out that relative to children whose parents did not deploy, children of deployed and combat-injured parents, respectively, had additional visits for mental health diagnoses (incidence rate ratio [IRR] = 1.09 [95% CI = 1.02-1.17], IRR = 1.67 [95% CI = 1.47-1.89]), injuries (IRR = 1.07 [95% CI = 1.04-1.09], IRR = 1.24 [95% CI = 1.17-1.32]), and child maltreatment (IRR = 1.21 [95% CI = 1.11-1.32], IRR 2.30 = [95% CI 2.02-2.61]) post deployment. The study presented a conceptual as our study will focus on at impact of social movements on social change.

Secondly, a methodological gap presents itself in this study, for example, the study conducted by Chiroro (2017), traced the origin of Chinkororo among Abagusii in the period 1961-1990, to investigate the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 1991-2002 and to analyze the changing trends in the recruitment training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 2002-2010. The study utilized descriptive research design while our study will use a desk study literature review methodology.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

The study concluded that the society is not a static element. It is a complex system of movements and counter movements pulling it in different directions. When this tussle is finally in favor of the movement, it becomes part of the social structure. A successful movement may become a part of the social order such as a trade union movement or save environment movement. The movement may disappear after achieving its goal. It may be concluded that social change refers to the modifications, which take place in the life patterns of people. It does not refer to all the changes going in the society. The changes in art, language, technology, philosophy etc., may not be included in the term social change which should be interpreted in a narrow sense to mean alterations in the field of social relationships. Social relationships are social processes, social patterns and social interactions. Thus, social change means variations of any aspect of social processes, social patterns, interactions or social organization. It is change in an institutional and normative structure of society.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended that, successful movements must define their goals clearly and target the institutions that have the power to make the changes they are demanding. Moreover successful movements should act in a political environment in which they have leverage to demand systemic change.

Protest is a crucial way of expressing political will and bringing about social change. It allows for expression and dissent between, during and after election cycles in democratic states, in states that are repressive and by people whose voices are generally excluded from formal or popular discourse. The study recommends that collaborative efforts are needed to ensure the sustainability and success of protest movements. There are numerous best practices that can lead to the effective exercise and facilitation of the right to protest



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