

## Unit 32 NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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### 32.1 Introduction

Since the middle of the last century 'social movements have moved from non-institutionalized margins of society to its very core'. The manifestation of new forms of organised collective actions since 1950s has added several new dimensions to the issues of social movement. In this context this unit will examine the social background of the emergence of new social movements. There are several new features of these movements. We have discussed these features at length in this unit. We have also tried to distinguish the new from the old social movements. The validity of these distinctions is also critically examined. The issues of new identity and autonomy of new social movements have been high lighted by several scholars. There issues are also examined in this unit.

### 32.2 New Social Movements: The Background

Since last five decades, especially after the proliferation of the Black Civil Rights Movement in the West in 1950s and 1960s, students movements in 1960s and 1970s, Women's Movement, anti-nuclear protests, gay rights, animal rights, minority nationalism etc. ethnic movements in 1970s and thereafter, social movements has emerged to be an area of special attention. There have been sincere efforts by the social scientists to redefine social movements from a critical and cognitive perspective. In this effort the prevalent schemes of analysis were questioned and many of the elements were identified in these social movement and at times several marginal issues were emphasized in a new contexts. The emergence of new forms of collective action especially in Western Europe and North America posed serious challenges to the social movement theorists to conceptualize this phenomena in terms of the prevailing discourse on social movement studies

Till 1950s the workers movements, peasants and tribal movements, at times caste, race, or linguistic and ethnic movements or other varieties of collective mobilisations are mostly explained within the Marxian framework of class struggle and the functionalist framework of mal functioning of the social order. It was however realized in the backdrop of the proliferation of these movements that these perspectives of studying social movements were deterministic. Within these conventions, social movements were analyzed mostly in terms of the ideological and organizational orientations. The Marxist scholars highlighted the class ideology of the collective mobilization. It emphasized on the role ideology that provided the legitimacy to such mobilizations. It focused on the unequal access to and control over the means of production between the two antagonistic classes that led to conflict in the society. In the functional analysis on the other, the organizational aspect of social movement articulated. For the Functionalist social movements were sources of potential disruption to an

organisation. Organized collective actions are viewed as dysfunctional aspect of the society. Here only by assigning a marginal position to social movement 'integrity of the functional theoretical system was ensured. On the other hand, though the Marxist analysis is concerned with social transformation, this has identified the 'classes' to be the sole agents of social transformation. Non-class movements are viewed critically, and sometimes with contempt or hostility' (Scott, A. 1990: 2).

Significantly both the Marxism and Functionalism provided single order explanation of the social movement. However the proliferation of these social movements in the 50s and 60s asked for a new perspective for analysis as there were new orientations. Most of the old movements are oriented to achieve in some form or the other materialistic goal. The new social movements on the other, are oriented to be non-materialistic, resort to plural, multiple and wide varieties of collective mobilisation, highlight the issues which cut across the boundaries of state, class, societies, culture and the nation. We shall be discussing these aspects of social movements in great details in the next section.

### 32.3 New Social Movement : Concepts and Features

It was indeed difficult to conceptualize the essence of all new forms of collective action within the paradigm of ideology or the rationally organised interest group. The practices of these new form of collective actions social movements are essentially non-violent, pragmatic, non-integrated, non-hierarchical, non-coercive, cross-class, cross-ideology, cross age in their constituencies (Hegedus, 1990: 63). Larana, Johnston and Guesfield (1994) suggest that the analysis of new social movements be advanced cross-culturally and by contrasting them with the class based movements of the past. They suggest the following characteristic features of the new social movement:

- a) There is no clear structural role of the participants of the new social movement as, very often than not, they have diffuse social status as youth, student, women, minority, professional groups etc.
- b) Ideologically these movements posited in sharp contrast to the Marxian concept of ideology of the working class movement. It is difficult to characterize new social movements as conservative or liberal, right or left, capitalist or socialist. These movements exhibit plural ideas and values.
- c) Mobilisations are linked to issues of symbolic and cultural identities than to economic issues.
- d) Action within these movements is a complex mix of the collective and individual confirmation of identity. Indeed the relation between the individual and the collective is blurred in these movements.
- e) These movements involve personal and intimate aspects of human life, e.g. eating, dressing enjoying, loving etc habits and patterns.
- f) Non-violence and civil disobedience etc. are the dominant patterns of collective mobilisation to challenge the dominant-norms of conduct.
- g) The proliferation of these movements are caused by the credibility crisis of the conventional channels for political participation.
- h) The new social movements are segmented diffused and decentralized (Ibid. :6-15).

Alan Scott identified the following prominent characteristics of these movements: a) These movements are primarily social and are more concerned with cultural sphere and mobilisation of civil society on socio-cultural issues, than with the political issues like seizure of power. b) These movements are

to be located within civil society and these are little concerned to challenge the state directly. These movements rather defend the civil societies against encroachment from increasingly technocratic state or from 'inner colonialisation' by society's technocratic sub-structure. c) These social movements attempt to bring about change through changing values and developing alternative life-styles. These social movements are concerned with cultural innovations and creation of new life-styles. These also pose a challenge to the traditional values. 'The focus on symbols and identities is viewed as the source of new social movement's significance'. The new social movements bring about changes by challenging values and identities of the social actors rather than by more conventional and direct political actions. The processes of transformation of values, personal identities and symbols can be achieved through creation of alternative life-style and the discursive reformation of individual and collective wills. The main characteristics of new social movements organization are summarized by Scott as follows: i) locally based or centered on small groups ii) organised around specific, often local and single issue iii) cycle of movement activity and mobilisation; i.e. vacillation between periods of high and low activity, iv) often loose systems of authority, v) shifting membership, vi) 'common social critique' as the ideological frame of reference (Scott, 1990: 18).

### 32.4 Distinguishing Old from the New

However, it is problematic to use organizational form as a criterion to distinguish new social movements from that of old ones. First, there is a continuum from loose to tight organization. and, because there may be a progress within the movements towards the more formal and hierarchical end of this continuum over a period of time. To Scott (1990), there are important continuities between the new and older social movements. 'Thus the claim the new movements needs to be understood in a way which is qualitatively different from traditional approaches can not be sustained on empirical grounds alone. It is rather through the underlying social changes the distinctiveness be identified (Ibid: 35).

Irrespective of the distinction between the old and the new social movements we may identify the crucial roles played by social movements to develop a critic of the society. In the process of globalisation when the state is emerging to be more and more technocratic and all-powerful the voices and views of the individual citizen against the discontent of various forms remain mostly unheard. Again in the countries where the state represent the dominant section of the population, and the state machinery is involved in the corrupt practices, the access of the marginalised people even to the minimum need of the life remained unrealized. Social movements provide a framework to develop a critic of the society. It brings the institutional arrangements of the society under close scrutiny. The organising mechanisms, collective activism and the leadership of social movement provide the required space not only to develop a critic of the society but also for a transformative politics within the given structure. It also provides the space for the emergence of plural social structure with representative civil bodies to function as watchdog in a liberal democracy. Through this critic social movement produces a new collective identity. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) have tried to define social movements as processes in the formation by which individuals create new kind of social identity. To them all social life can be seen as a combination of action and construction whose meaning is deprived from the context and the understanding of the actors derive form it. They emphasize the creative role of consciousness and cognition in human action, what they call the cognitive praxis, which transforms groups of individual into social movement. Thus the cognitive praxis gives social movement particular meaning and consciousness.

### 32.5 New Social Movements and Quest for New

## Identity

In the last unit we have mentioned about the significance of the process identity formation in a social movement, which has always played crucial roles to provide a sense of 'togetherness', 'we' feeling and a sense of 'belonging to' a group in all the critical stages progression of the movement. It not only develops linkages among the members of a group but also establishes linkages with the wider social processes. The process of collective identity formation not only redefines old identities, but also generates new identities with new perspective(s). In recent decades in the efforts to identify 'newness' in emerging social movements of the 1960s and there after, there has also been a genuine to have a fresh look on the issue of identity in social movements.

In the structural functional analysis of the society empirical categories (e.g. tribe, caste, race, aged, etc) has got a place of prominence while describing collective identities of these categories. In the Marxian analysis, on the other hand economic position has got a place of prominence in defining collectivities as 'class'. In this paradigm social identity has been reduced to class identity, which undergoes a process of formation/ transformation from 'class in itself' to 'class for itself. We shall highlight this formation/transformation little later. However, since late 1960s and onward, especially after the proliferation of the students, Green Peace, Black Civil Rights, women's etc movements in the United States and Western Europe efforts are made to comprehend and analyze the emerging processes of new collective identify formation in these social movements and the guiding principles towards these formations. It has been widely realized that it is not merely the empirical and the economic class position, but rather the issue of values, culture, subjectivity, morality, empowerment etc played crucial roles towards the formation of new collective identities in these movements. For example, after studying students' movement in Europe and America, Bertaux (1990) adds the view that "subjectivity" and "idealism" are essential elements of social movement and must be taken seriously. To quote him: subjectivity is central to an understanding of action and especially in the context of social movements, where action is not just norm abiding behaviour, but innovative and risky. Such concept as 'attitudes' or 'values' denote only one fraction of the personality while subjectivity refers to the subject in its totality." Indeed, Bertaux talks about the collective subjectivity: "it concerns with the drastic change in the fabric of social life that takes place when a new movement is born." Regarding idealism, citing example from the first developing western societies, he observes that people who started social movements "were moved by a strong moral feelings—by idealism, rather than by a drive towards self interest" (1990:153).

Social movements help generate a sense of collective identity and new ideas that recognizes the reality itself. This reality is indeed context, culture, historicity and group specific. Melucci has emphasized on collective identity formation "which is an achieved definition of a situation, constructed and negotiated through the constitution of social networks which then connect the members of a group or movement through collective action to provide distinctive meaning to collective action. To him, what holds individual together as a 'we' can never be completely translated into the logic of means-ends calculation or political rationality, but always carries with it margins of non-negotiability in the reasons for an ways of acting together' (Melucci 1992). To him, social movements grow around relationship of new social identity that are voluntarily conceived "to empower" members in defense of this identity (1992, 1996). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) assert that 'by articulating consciousness, social movement provides public spaces for generating new thoughts, activating new actors, generating new ideas. Thus by producing new knowledge, by reflecting on their own cognitive identity, by saying what they stand for, by challenging the dominant assumptions of the social order, social movements develop new ideas those are fundamental to the process of

human creativity. Thus social movements develop worldviews that restructure cognition, that re-cognize reality itself. The cognitive praxis of social movements is an important source of new social images and transformation of societal identities (1991: 161-166). Hegedus (1990) asserts that social movements involve actions for 'doing'. 'The involvement in an action is a matter of conscience and emotion, of responsibility and intention, of reflection and (com) passion, it is basically moral, global and individual (1990: 266). Thus social movements are framed based on a collective identity of various groups viz., women, environmentalists, students, peasant, worker etc. who are organised on the basis of common identity and interests. To Allan Scott (1991), in a social movement the actor's collective identity is linked to their understanding of their social situation. To him 'a social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interest, and at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity' (1991: 6)

### Transformation of Identity

Social movements not only help generating new collective identity these also provide a broad field for the transformation of social identity [e.g. transforming *Serie* into *groups en fusion*, (Sartre 1960), 'class-in-itself' to 'class-for-itself', (Marx 1974) etc.]. Sartre calls *serie* the normal state of crowds; that is, series of atomized individuals, each one seen as isolated in his or her inner world going his or her own way and not caring about the other's ways. What Sartre is pointing out, however, is that, whenever and wherever this figure is actually doing or even walking in the street, it has a silent companion: 'social control'. "The public space is wholly under the control of the established power. Every individual, whatever she or he thinks of the manifest public discourse 'All is well' and its latent content 'Nothing can be changed', whether he or she accepts the rule of this power or rejects it, does so secretly, thus behaving as if accepting it. Therefore each one, looking at all the others who work, comply and keep quiet, thinks they are alone in secretly rejecting this social order. When, however, frustration mounts in each person individually, it takes only a small event to trigger an instantaneous and massive change of state, from *serie* to *groupe en fusion*. As soon as each person in a serialized mass realizes that some others contest the established power, as he or she takes one step forward to openly express support, a chain reaction spreads through the atomized series and transforms it into a fluid group (*sartre's groupe en fusion*) which instantly moves from the status of subordinated passive object to that of subject capable of action." (cf. Bertaux. 1990: 155-156). Indeed, new social movements provide the required platform for such transformation.

In the Marxian analysis transformation in the collective identity has been viewed as transformation of the class identities from that of 'class-in 'itself' to 'class-for-itself'. In this analogy, however, transformation of societal identity is viewed in terms of the transformation of class identities only.

It is important that in the context of transformation of a social movements new identities do emerge from within the old ones. For example in the process of sustained mobilisation of the peasantry in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh new identities have emerged in these peasant societies in the form of gender, ethnicity and caste identities. We shall be discussing this issue in the last section of this unit.

## 32.6 Autonomy of New Identity

Can new identity as formed out of collective action be autonomous of the ideology and organisation of the movement? Scholars have identified new social movement's ideology with freedom and life. In this context the notion of autonomy is crucial. There are several dimensions to this issue.



- 1) Personal autonomy: 'Psycho-social practices, such as consciousness arising within the women's movement, have had at least one of their aims - the liberation of individual women from personal and ideological barriers to personal freedom through the reconstruction of their life histories and by making them aware of personal oppressions, while at the same time stressing their potential power as women'.
- 2) Extension of Personal and Group Autonomy: 'The narrowly defined political aims of these movements are comprehended as an extension of personal and group autonomy by challenging several restrictions on freedom'. Thus the arguments for free abortions on demand can be viewed as a way of increasing a women's freedom to make choices concerning her own body, of removal or gender or racial discrimination at work as extending of range of individual or collective freedom enjoyed by group members'
- 3) Autonomy struggle: Autonomy struggle of the new social movements demands that the representatives of these movements be allowed to fight their own "without interference from other movements and without subordinating their demands to other external priorities'. These aspects of autonomy are closely linked (Scott, 1990:18-20).

However, any attempt to conceptualize new social movements exclusively in terms of autonomy may be confusing. The distinction between personal and political is not very clean. The issue of personal autonomy, freedom etc. are political in nature" (Scott, 90: 23). The assumption that new social movement is autonomous of political interference and is essentially concerned with cultural issues is also not valid. Many of the new social movements are concerned with the political questions, for example 'citizens' rights; representations, civil rights movements. All these are oriented towards political and legal institutions. Thus the issue of autonomy is to be circumscribed specifically in the context of the social movement under study.

## 32.7 New Social Movements and Resistance against Domination

Actors in subordinate positions are never wholly dependent and are often very adept at converting whatsoever resources they possess into some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system (Giddens (1982). Thus 'compliance of the subordinate within the power relations may be explained not by lack of resistance, but by the absence of the means to implement such resistance' (Mann 1985). The structure of the domination thus, is not free from contestation. There have been resistance and struggle in various forms against this domination. To J.C. Scott even in the large-scale structures of domination the subordinates have a fairly extensive social existence outside the immediate control of the dominant. It is in such settings that a shared critique of domination develops by way of 'creating a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power as spoken behind the back of the dominant.' He suggests that rumours, gossip, folktales, songs, gestures, jokes and the theater of the powerless function as a mechanism to indirectly develop a critique of power (1990: viii). Let us examine the ways, new collective identities have emerged in India as a language of resistance against domination.

***New Collective Identities:*** Identity is a social construction. 'It is a continually shifting description of ourselves' (Hall 1990). Identities are emerged based on the probability of choice, plurality of options and reasons. And to 'to deny plurality, choice and reasoning in identity can be a source of repression' (Sen 1999: 22). Identities are self-cognition tied to roles, through roles, to positions in organized social relationships. That a given identity can be invoked in a variety of situations or it 'can be defined as differential probability.' Here ' we may reflect on the multiple identities of the contemporary subject, that is the

weaving of the patterns of identity from the discourses of class, race, nation gender, etc. (Stryker 1990:873-74). The construction of identity also involves the social production of boundaries reflecting the process of inclusion and exclusion (Cerutti 2001). As collective identity is a matter of social construction, it gets reconstructed in multiple ways in the process of transformation of social movements. Social movements not only help generate new collective identity, but also provide a broad field for the transformation of this identity.

Sustained grassroots mobilizations have paved the way for the articulation and rejuvenation of gender, caste, farmer, citizen, and ethnic etc identities. In West Bengal peasants have been part of the Kamtapuri Movement as in North Bengal, and limited NGO activism and in Andhra Pradesh the anti-arrack (prohibition) movement, Maadigaa and Thudum Debba, Telangana statehood movement civil liberties, farmers etc movements.

The Kamtapur movement for regional, cultural, ethnic autonomy of the Rajbanshi (a Scheduled caste) has started gaining ground in north Bengal with the demand of a separate state comprising the six districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda. To initiate this movement, a regional party by the name of Uttarakhand Dal was formed in 1980. Now this movement has got momentum under the leadership of the Kamtapur People's Party (KPP). Through this movement the Rajbanshis are putting up resistance against the gradual erosion of their cultural and linguistic identity, and their economic marginalization in society. They allege that north Bengal has been economically neglected and politically dominated by the Kolkata centered state administration of West Bengal. This movement has taken a new turn with the formation of an extremist group called the Kamtapuri Liberation Organisation (KLO) which has initiated frontal attack on the Left activists in various parts of North Bengal. A section of the Rajbanshis, who are now growing more and more identity conscious in terms of history, language, traditional social structure, occupation and land rights has become part of this movement. Unemployed educated youth and school dropouts are more open in expressing their adherence to this movement than others. A young man from Naxalbari (who preferred to remain unidentified in the wake of police action against KLO activists), says:

"We are deprived of all opportunities in our own land. The outsiders own the tea gardens. All government services are taken away and manned by the *bhatias* ( Bengali migrants from other part of the state). ... Marwaris and Punjabis who look down upon us, own all the businesses. They laugh at our language, our food habits, and our dress. We have to speak in their language in our own land.....".

Though the separate Telangana statehood movement in the Telangana region of Andhra Pradesh has a long history, it has got a momentum in recent years with the formation of the Telangana Rastriya Samithi (TRS) and its electoral success in the last election. Several issues have been raised pertaining to Andhra domination over the Telangana region in the economic, cultural and political terms. Most important among these have been that of the exploitation of the natural resources of Telangana for the benefits of the other parts of the state, appointment of more and more Andhra-speaking people in the government jobs in the Telangana region, and persisting agricultural backwardness, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, etc., of the people of Telangana. The economic miseries of Telangana are explained in terms of Andhra domination over Telangana. 'The wholesale exploitation of the resources of Telangana for the benefit of the Andhra region is accompanied by attacks on the way of life of the Telangana people. ...The Andhra rulers are never tired of saying that the people of Telangana are uncultured. Thus the suicidal attempt to subjugate Telangana permanently continues' (Jadhav 1997)

Again Maadigaa Reservation Porata Samithi movement of the Scheduled Castes

and Thudum Debba movement of the Scheduled Tribes are demanding re-categorization of each of the Scheduled castes and tribes of Andhra Pradesh into A, B, C, and D categories based on their levels of economic, educational and political advancement for the purpose of getting benefits of reservation. Again there have been the cotton growers' and anti-suicide movements of the farmers in the Telangana region. The anti-arrack movement led by peasant women has had its strong impact all over Andhra Pradesh. Poor peasants have been parts of most of these movements. For example, Rajeeramma, the female *sarpanch* of Malla Reddy Palle, was associated with the anti-arrack movement. She is also a strong advocate of the Maadigaa reservation movement, and a participant in the cotton growers and anti-suicide movements. She is also part of the separate Telangana state movement. She says, 'the life of a peasant women in Telangana is full of struggle and we are all part of the struggle in Telangana'.

The Left political parties have tried both ideologically and strategically to inculcate the 'class for itself' identity of the peasantry. However, over the years, in the process of ideological modification and strategic class alliance with the landed gentry for electoral politics, the basis of class-based politics has widely eroded among the peasantry (Bhattacharyya 1999). Again as the class identity has not looked many of the micro issues. Thus in alongside the old actors of the class, groups, political parties and the state with all its instruments, new actors have emerged' in the form of caste, gender, ethnicity and religion (Webster 1999).

*Autonomy of Identity:* The process of transformation peasant movements from radicalization to institutionalization has exhibited a trend of transition from the so-called 'old' to 'new' social movements. It has been highlighted that new social movements do not bear a clear relation to the structural role of the participants, that their social base transcends class structures, that they exhibit plural ideas and values, that their ideological characteristics stand in sharp contrast to the Marxist concept of ideology as a unifying and totalizing element for collective action, and that they involve the emergence of new collective identities. 'These characteristics of the new social movements however are not independent of their links with the past. Nor is there any absence of continuity with the old, although that varies with each movement ... Even movements with old histories have emerged in new forms with more diffuse goals and different modes of mobilization and conversion. It is both the newness of expression and extension as well as the magnitude and saliency of such movements that constitutes the basis for revised frameworks of understanding' (Larana, Johnston and Guesfield 1984: 8-9).

The social agenda of the new social movements are 'based on local movements with multiple identities located in civil society, stressing new ways of social communication (solidarity and mutual understanding) and a new harmonic relationship with nature (Schuurman 1993: 189). In the context of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, it is observed that the old mass movements that advocated the emancipatory projects for the proletariat through seizure of political power have given birth to various local movements of multiple identities in the process of transformation of these movements and sustenance of these mobilisations. These have started exhibiting a plurality of ideas, values, ideological orientations and collective action. The process of formation of new collective identities frequently and explicitly transcends the pre-defined process of class identity formation as most of the new collective identities, namely, gender, caste, region and ethnicity, are autonomous of the given aims and objectives of the movement of the Left parties.

It would however be problematic to describe the autonomy of the evolved patterns of identity in terms of the new social movements alone, as the substantive issues involved in mobilization do not purely belong to the cultural



domain alone. There are several political and economic issues involved in these mobilizations rather. Through their everyday experiences of struggle and prolonged participation in collective action the peasantry has been trained to defend their identity and to articulate the strategy of their resistance against domination. These everyday life experiences of resistance form the basis of the praxis of peasantry against domination whereby they have also got alternative choices to express their resistance against domination

In the context of new social movements, the notion of autonomy has been used as the expression of personal autonomy, extension of personal and group autonomy and as an expression of autonomy struggle whereby social movements are allowed to grow without interference from the outside (Scott. 1990). Subaltern studies have, on the other hand, visualized the autonomy of the peasant struggle in terms of their localized manifestations. Ranajit Guha argues that during the colonial period, subaltern constituted an autonomous domain with wide variety of generally autonomous modes of thought and action expressed through rebellions, riots and popular movements. To him 'rebellion was not, therefore, merely some automatic reflex action to external economic or political stimulus; it was 'peasant praxis', the expression through peasant action of the collective consciousness of the peasantry (Guha 1983). According to Sumit Sarkar, the spontaneous unrest like the looting of *hats*, tribal movements, kisan movements, and so on often tended to remain autonomous, scattered and remained mostly outside the ambit of the mainstream nationalist movement in colonial India. He also points out that the poor man typically outmatches his oppressor not through any kind of joint action but through an individual battle of wits and often at a great cost to himself (Sarkar 1985: 51-62). Partha Chatterjee is of the view that the 'dominant groups, in their exercise of domination do not consume or destroy the dominated classes for there would be no relation of power and hence no domination. Without their autonomy the subalterns would have no identity of their own (Chatterjee 1998: 166).

The new identities as have been evolved and constructed in the peasant societies of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are in their own ways autonomous of the organizational, ideological and pre-defined boundaries of collectivities as propagated in the class discourse. However these multiple identities of caste, gender, region, ethnicity, etc., have defined boundaries of inclusion and exclusion—and also at times use the organizational linkages and ideologies of wider society as guiding principles for their actions. For example, the ethnic movements in north Bengal and in the Telangana region, the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes reservation movements, civil liberties women's groups etc have formed their own organizations at the regional and the state level. Likewise, is the process of formation of NGOs, which is linked with the emerging social development discourse of 'development with empowerment'. The self-assertion of, say, a scheduled caste labourer, and a tribal woman are also linked to the resurgence of the Dalit and women's movements at the grassroots.

But all these identities, and linkages of these identities to the wider world, are not sudden manifestations. Nor are they imposed from outside by the intervention of outside agencies. Rather, peasantry has articulated their issues through their everyday experiences, and the new identities are formed from within in the process of responding to the emerging challenges they regularly face. Sustained mobilizations have made the peasantry aware of the various bases of their oppression and subordination in society, be it caste, class, ethnicity, regionalism, gender, etc. Hence they are to articulate accordingly the art of their resistance both individually and collectively; if needed by reconstructing parallel, and at times alternative, identities. Here linkages with outside agencies come at a later stage through increasing interactivity with the larger world around. Pulla Ravindran) a scheduled caste leader from Warangal

in Andhra Pradesh, recalls his experience:

We have been oppressed and exploited in various ways. At times we are exploited as the Maadigaa scheduled caste. Our women are exploited as women, labourers, and as scheduled caste members. We are also exploited and discriminated against as Telanganites ... As we have been aware of the various situations of our oppression, we resist it in all possible ways. Our oppression however does not end. If we resist from one direction, it appears from the other.. We try to resist oppression from all possible directions now.

In spite of transformation of the peasant movements from the phase of radicalization to institutionalization, and sustenance of the mobilizations, the peasantry continues to be marginalized. Though their identity has been reconstructed over the years, the elements of marginality—both in the socio-economic and the political sense—remain attached to them. The issue of livelihood security is of crucial significance to the peasantry. They tend to use the available channels of political mobilization and activism to ensure the daily livelihood. They are to compromise at times with the structure of domination for their livelihood security. In this context, their participation in routinized collective mobilization, even if it contributes to their domination, is a matter of their rational calculation.

Indeed, through sustained mobilization, peasants have been able to carve out a space for the articulation of their interests and formation of new identities that look for liberation from the coercive bases of dependency and domination. Through these identities they try to gain legitimacy of their praxis against domination.

## 32.8 Conclusion

In this unit we have discussed the socio-political background of the emergence of new social movements in the West. Scholars have identified several new features of this social phenomena. We have briefly highlighted these features. The distinguishing features between the new and the old social movement are also discussed here. Formation of new collective identity and autonomy of these identities have been subjects of critical query in the social movement studies. These issues have also been discussed here. In the last section we have discussed the process emergence of new collective identities with the transformation of social movements. Here articulation of language of resistance against domination as emerged within new social movements here also been discussed.

## 32.9 Further Readings

1. Larana, E. et al. (Eds) 1984. *New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity*. Temple University Press: Philadelphia.
2. Scott, A.C. 1991. *Ideology and New Social Movements*. Unwin Hyman: London.