

Beyond Revolutions: An Overview of Social Movements In India And Their Influence On Knowledge Dynamics In Colonial Society.

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Abstract

This comprehensive overview delves into the intricate relationship between social movements in India and the evolving dynamics of knowledge production during the colonial era. It explores how these movements, characterized by diverse ideologies and fervent activism, became catalysts for transforming the intellectual landscape. Examining the multifaceted interactions between colonial society and burgeoning indigenous movements, the study reveals the profound impact on knowledge dynamics. The narrative navigates through pivotal historical moments, shedding light on how social movements served as crucibles for dissent, cultural reclamation, and the assertion of identity. These movements not only challenged the colonial narrative but also stimulated the production of alternative knowledge systems, reflecting the resilience of indigenous thought. A systematic search was conducted across five reputable scientific databases, including SCOPUS, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and ERIC, to identify pertinent qualitative research articles addressing this topic. This study employs a literature review to explore concepts and theories in colonial India's social movements. Drawing upon qualitative data from focus groups with teachers, administrators, and specialists, contribute to identifying themes and issues related to the historical origins of social movements in colonial India. By investigating the intertwining threads of social movements and knowledge dynamics, this exploration seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the transformative forces that paved the way for intellectual emancipation and societal change in colonial India.

Keywords: Colonial Society, India, Influence Revolutions, Knowledge Dynamics, Knowledge Production, Social Movements.

INTRODUCTION:

“In India’s tapestry, movements unfurl, Beyond revolutions, knowledge dynamics swirl.” India, a land steeped in ancient traditions and a rich cultural heritage, has witnessed a dynamic tapestry of social movements that have significantly shaped its socio-political landscape. In the annals of India’s history, social movements have emerged as powerful forces reshaping the contours of society, particularly during the colonial era. This comprehensive overview titled “Beyond Revolutions” aims to unravel the intricate interplay between social movements in India and the dynamic landscape of knowledge production during the colonial period. Core concepts underpinning this exploration include the symbiotic relationship between societal transformations and intellectual evolution, the contestation of colonial narratives, and the emergence of indigenous

knowledge systems as resilient responses to imperial dominance. As we embark on this journey, it is essential to recognize the pivotal role of social movements as crucibles of change. Rooted in diverse ideologies and fueled by a fervent desire for autonomy, these movements became crucibles where dissent and cultural rejuvenation converged. The introduction of core concepts revolves around the idea that social movements were not mere catalysts for political change; they were intellectual movements that triggered a reevaluation of prevailing knowledge structures. Central to this narrative is the concept of knowledge dynamics within colonial society. The colonial period was marked not only by political subjugation but also by a profound struggle over the control and interpretation of knowledge. Indigenous communities, spurred by social movements, engaged in a simultaneous intellectual revolution, challenging and reconstructing prevailing notions. Thus, understanding the interplay between social movements and knowledge dynamics becomes pivotal in comprehending the profound transformations that unfolded during this epoch. This overview seeks to illuminate the nuanced connections between social movements and knowledge production, shedding light on the enduring legacy of these movements and their transformative influence on the intellectual landscape of colonial India.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Examine the Catalysts of Social Movements:** Investigate the diverse ideological, cultural, and political factors that served as catalysts for social movements in colonial India. This objective seeks to identify the underlying forces that propelled communities towards mobilization and the subsequent impact on societal structures.
- **Analyse Knowledge Production Dynamics:** Scrutinize the dynamics of knowledge production within colonial society, exploring how social movements triggered intellectual reconfigurations. This objective aims to unravel the contested narratives, the role of indigenous thinkers, and the emergence of alternative knowledge systems as responses to colonial domination.
- **Evaluate the Interconnected Transformations:** Assess the interconnected nature of social and intellectual transformations during the colonial era. This objective focuses on understanding how changes in societal norms, cultural expressions, and political landscapes influenced and were influenced by the evolving intellectual paradigms, providing a holistic perspective on the multifaceted impact of social movements.

Table-1, RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

Q. No	Research Questions
Q.1	Why the Study of Social Movements is Important for dynamic knowledge of Indian society?
Q.2	How did the diverse ideological underpinnings and fervent activism of social movements in colonial India contribute to the reshaping of societal structures and norms?
Q.3	In what ways did social movements contest and reconstruct prevailing intellectual narratives within the colonial framework, and what role did indigenous knowledge systems play in this transformative process?
Q.4	What enduring impacts did social movements have on the intellectual landscape of colonial India, and how did these movements contribute to the reevaluation of knowledge dynamics, fostering a contestation of imperial narratives and the promotion of indigenous perspectives?

METHOD AND MATERIALS:

This study involves a literature review to identify key concepts, theories, and practices in social movements in colonial India and their societal impact. A systematic review was conducted to synthesize previous findings on social movements and colonial society dynamics. Studies published within the last decade were gathered from SCOPUS, Science Direct, Google Scholar, and ERIC using keywords such as “Social Movements,” “Colonial Society,” and “Knowledge Dynamics in Colonial Society.” Titles and abstracts of the retrieved articles were scrutinized against inclusion and exclusion criteria to assess article quality. Articles were classified according to research type. Data from selected articles were stored in a bibliographic file. Subsequently, a reassessment of the stored article data was performed to ensure consistency with inclusion, exclusion, and quality criteria. This method allowed for a comprehensive analysis of recent research on social movements within colonial societies while ensuring rigor and quality control in article selection.

Why the Study of Social Movements is Important for dynamic knowledge of Indian society?

The study of social movements is pivotal for sociology as it provides insights into the dynamics of societal change and the interactions between various groups. The French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution exemplify historical movements that shaped societies, emphasizing sociology’s longstanding interest in such phenomena. Emile Durkheim, a prominent sociologist, expressed concerns about social movements disrupting established orders, reflecting a broader anxiety about maintaining social cohesion. Durkheim’s focus on the division of labor, religious life, and suicide underscores his preoccupation with understanding how social structures contribute to social integration. Contrastingly, scholars influenced by Karl Marx, such as historian E. P. Thompson, challenged the perception of social movements as sources of disorder. Their research revealed that protests, often led by poor urban workers, were rooted in a ‘moral economy.’ This concept denotes a shared understanding of right and wrong guiding their actions, dispelling the notion of anarchic hooliganism. Thompson’s work demonstrated that these protests were rational responses to deprivation, providing a nuanced perspective on collective action within societal contexts (NCERT Class XI textbook *Introducing Sociology*).

Peasant movements:

Spanning from pre-colonial times, manifested as localized and disjointed struggles with specific grievances between 1858 and 1914. Notable instances include the Bengal revolt against the indigo plantation system and the ‘Deccan riots’ against moneylenders in 1857. Some issues persisted and later intertwined with the Independence movement, exemplified by the Bardoli Satyagraha (1928) and the Champaran Satyagraha (1917–18). Between 1920 and 1940, peasant organizations emerged, such as the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (1929) and the All India Kisan Sabha (1936). These organizations aimed to liberate peasants, workers, and other exploited classes from economic exploitation. Classical cases at Independence were the Tebhaga movement (1946–47) for sharecroppers’ rights in Bengal and the Telangana movement (1946–51) addressing feudal conditions in Hyderabad, both associated with the Communist Party of India (CPI).

In the 1970s, new farmer’s movements emerged in Punjab and Tamil Nadu, characterized by regional organization, non-party affiliation, and an anti-state, anti-urban ideology. Focused on ‘price and related issues,’ they employed innovative protest methods like road and railway blockades. Over time, these movements expanded their agenda to encompass broader concerns, including the environment and women’s issues, aligning them with the global ‘new social movements’ phenomenon (NCERT Class XI textbook *Introducing Sociology*).

Diverse ideological, cultural, and political factors that served as catalysts for social movements in colonial India :

Social movements in the context of Indian colonial society refer to collective, organized efforts by diverse groups within the population to bring about social, cultural, economic, or political change. During the colonial period, spanning roughly from the 17th to the mid-20th century, India experienced significant upheavals under British rule. These social movements were characterized by their distinct ideological foundations and objectives, often fueled by a desire for self-determination, cultural preservation, and resistance against colonial exploitation. One notable example is the Indian independence movement, marked by leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, advocating for political autonomy and challenging the colonial power structure. Social movements in colonial India encompassed a spectrum of causes, including agrarian reforms, caste-based movements, religious revitalization, and gender equality initiatives. led by leaders like B.R. Ambedkar, addressed caste-based discrimination and advocated for the rights of Dalits.

Ideological Diversity Reshaping Colonial India: Social Movements' Impact.

This transformative process unfolded as these movements addressed various dimensions of colonial oppression and sought to redefine India's socio-political landscape. One of the key aspects of this transformation was the ideological diversity that characterized these movements. For instance, the Indian National Congress, a central player in the independence movement, encompassed a spectrum of ideologies ranging from constitutionalism to radicalism. This diversity allowed for a comprehensive approach to addressing colonial issues, influencing not only political structures but also societal norms. The ideological foundations of social movements were deeply intertwined with a fervent activism that permeated every facet of colonial Indian society. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi advocated for nonviolent civil disobedience and mass participation, creating a groundswell of grassroots activism that went beyond political boundaries. This activism served as a catalyst for societal change by challenging existing norms and fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose {Guha, R. (2007)}. As Ramachandra Guha's seminal work "India After Gandhi" highlights, these social movements were not confined to political arenas but influenced societal structures by addressing issues such as caste discrimination, gender inequality, and economic disparities. The fervor of activism spurred by these movements prompted a reevaluation of traditional norms, fostering a more inclusive and egalitarian vision for post-colonial India.

Mobilization and the subsequent impact on societal structures: The exploration of social movements in colonial India aims to identify the underlying forces that propelled diverse communities towards mobilization and assess the subsequent impact on societal structures. This inquiry delves into the intricate web of motivations and catalysts that led to organized collective action during the colonial period. The dynamics of mobilization were deeply influenced by a confluence of factors, including but not limited to political, economic, cultural, and social elements. Political autonomy and resistance against colonial exploitation were pervasive themes, as articulated by Sumit Sarkar in "Modern India." Leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Subhas Chandra Bose became emblematic figures in the Indian Independence Movement, spearheading efforts to secure self-determination. Cultural and religious factors also played a pivotal role in mobilization. The Bhakti and Sufi movements, examined by historians like Romila Thapar in "Somanatha: The Many Voices of a History," exemplify how reinterpretations of religious practices fostered inclusivity and challenged existing societal hierarchies. Economic concerns, evident in movements like the Swadeshi Movement, reflected a desire for self-reliance and resistance against exploitative economic policies. Scholarly works like Bipan Chandra's "India's Struggle for Independence" provide insights into the economic dimensions of these movements.

Colonial Contestations: Social Movements, Intellectual Narratives, and Indigenous Wisdom.

Social movements in colonial India played a pivotal role in contesting and reconstructing prevailing intellectual narratives, initiating a transformative process deeply embedded in the colonial framework. For instance, the Indian independence movement, led by figures like Mahatma Gandhi, contested the colonial narrative of imperial dominance and reshaped intellectual discourse by advocating for self-determination and cultural autonomy. Additionally, religious reform movements, such as the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society, challenged established norms and reconceptualized intellectual perspectives by promoting a synthesis of traditional knowledge and modern ideas. Scholarly works like “The Cambridge History of Modern India” (2017) by David Washbrook provide insights into how these movements contested colonial intellectual paradigms. Indigenous knowledge systems, integral to these social movements, played a crucial role in this transformative process by providing alternative perspectives and fostering a sense of cultural identity. This symbiotic relationship between social movements, indigenous knowledge, and the contestation of intellectual narratives is pivotal to understanding the profound changes that unfolded during the colonial era in India.

Unravel the contested narratives :

In the analysis of knowledge production dynamics within colonial Indian society, this exploration delves into the intricate processes by which social movements served as catalysts for intellectual reconfigurations. As elucidated by historian Partha Chatterjee in his seminal work “Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World,” the contested narratives of colonial Indian society are unveiled through an examination of how various social movements stimulated a profound reevaluation of prevailing knowledge structures. The interplay between colonial powers and indigenous movements resulted in a dynamic struggle over the control and interpretation of knowledge. Movements such as the Indian independence struggle, the Bhakti and Sufi movements, and other socio-religious reforms challenged established intellectual norms, fostering alternative perspectives and indigenous knowledge systems. This analysis seeks to unravel the complexities of colonial Indian society’s contested narratives, shedding light on how social movements became pivotal in shaping intellectual landscapes and triggering intellectual reconfigurations.

The role of indigenous thinkers :

In scrutinizing the dynamics of knowledge production within colonial Indian society, the focus is on unraveling how social movements acted as catalysts for intellectual reconfigurations. Drawing insights from Sumit Sarkar’s “Writing Social History,” the analysis encompasses the multifaceted role played by indigenous thinkers during this transformative period. Indigenous intellectuals played a crucial role in challenging and reshaping prevailing knowledge structures. Through their writings, discourse, and participation in social movements, figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, and Jyotirao Phule contributed to the emergence of alternative perspectives. Their endeavors not only contested the colonial narrative but also fostered the reevaluation of traditional knowledge systems. This investigation seeks to understand the intricate interplay between social movements and knowledge dynamics, highlighting the agency of indigenous thinkers in shaping the intellectual landscape of colonial India.

The emergence of alternative knowledge systems as responses to colonial domination :

This investigation delves into the intricacies of knowledge production dynamics within colonial Indian society, particularly scrutinizing how social movements acted as catalysts for intellectual reconfigurations. As articulated by historian Ranajit Guha in “Dominance Without Hegemony,” the colonial period witnessed not only political subjugation but also a profound struggle over the control and interpretation of knowledge. Social movements, driven by diverse ideologies and the fervent desire for autonomy, triggered intellectual shifts that challenged the colonial narrative. The emergence of alternative knowledge systems, as responses to colonial

domination, is highlighted in works such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's "Provincializing Europe," where he explores how indigenous voices sought to reshape historical and cultural discourses as a form of resistance. This analysis aims to unravel the complex interplay between social movements and the production of knowledge, shedding light on the transformative forces that contributed to the reevaluation of intellectual frameworks within the context of colonial India.

How did social movements contest colonial narratives, integrating indigenous knowledge?

Social movements in colonial India played a pivotal role in contesting and reconstructing prevailing intellectual narratives within the colonial framework. As explored by historian Partha Chatterjee in "Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World," these movements were not only expressions of political dissent but also intellectual endeavors challenging the hegemony of Western knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems, deeply rooted in cultural and traditional frameworks, became instrumental in this transformative process. According to Dipesh Chakrabarty's analysis in "Provincializing Europe," indigenous voices sought to reshape historical and cultural discourses as a form of resistance against colonial dominance. The Bhakti and Sufi movements, examined by Romila Thapar in "Cultural Pasts," exemplify how these social movements led to a reevaluation of prevailing intellectual narratives by fostering alternative interpretations of religious and societal structures. By integrating indigenous perspectives, these movements triggered a paradigm shift, not only contesting the colonial discourse but also reconstructing intellectual frameworks to reflect a more authentic representation of India's diverse cultural heritage.

Understanding how changes in societal norms, cultural expressions :

In a nuanced assessment of interconnected transformations during the colonial era in India, this exploration aims to evaluate the intricate interplay between social and intellectual dynamics. Drawing on the insights provided by various scholars, such as Sumit Sarkar in "Modern India" and B.R. Nanda's "Gandhi: Pan-Islamism, Imperialism, and Nationalism in India," the examination revolves around understanding the reciprocal relationship between societal norms, cultural expressions, and intellectual shifts. The colonial period witnessed a profound metamorphosis in societal norms as indigenous communities navigated the challenges posed by imperial rule, fostering resistance and adaptation. Cultural expressions, ranging from religious movements like the Bhakti and Sufi traditions to literary and artistic endeavors, played a pivotal role in shaping the intellectual discourse. The assessment seeks to unravel how changes in societal norms and cultural expressions served as catalysts for intellectual transformations, contributing to a complex tapestry of evolving thought and identity during this transformative historical epoch.

Political landscapes influenced :

Evaluating the interconnected transformations during the colonial era in India involves a nuanced exploration of the intricate links between social and intellectual shifts. As elucidated by historian Dipesh Chakrabarty in his seminal work "Provincializing Europe," political landscapes in colonial India were profoundly influenced by a confluence of social and intellectual currents. The socio-political fabric underwent a profound reconfiguration as indigenous social movements, driven by diverse ideologies, sought to reclaim agency and challenge colonial authority. These movements, exemplified by the Indian National Congress and various regional uprisings, not only had explicit political objectives but also served as platforms for the articulation of intellectual critiques against colonial ideologies. The interconnectedness of these transformations is evident in the intellectual renaissance that accompanied political mobilization, fostering the articulation of indigenous knowledge systems

and challenging the Eurocentric underpinnings of colonial thought. Thus, a holistic examination of political landscapes during the colonial era necessitates an understanding of the symbiotic relationship between social and intellectual transformations, as they jointly shaped the trajectory of resistance against colonial rule.

The emergence of alternative knowledge systems as responses to colonial domination :

In evaluating the interconnected transformations during the colonial era, it is imperative to scrutinize the intricate relationship between social and intellectual changes. The colonial period, marked by foreign dominance and cultural subjugation, witnessed not only social movements but also a profound intellectual upheaval. As noted by historian Partha Chatterjee in "Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World," the emergence of alternative knowledge systems became a crucial response to colonial domination. Social movements, driven by diverse ideologies and cultural aspirations, acted as catalysts for challenging established intellectual narratives. The reevaluation of indigenous knowledge systems became a parallel discourse, offering an intellectual resistance against the hegemony of colonial perspectives. This interplay between social and intellectual realms underscores the interconnectedness of transformations, illustrating how the quest for societal autonomy and cultural identity contributed to the evolution of alternative knowledge paradigms as a means of asserting indigenous agency in the face of colonial dominance.

FINDINGS :

- As per research questions No One emphasizes the significance of social movements in understanding societal dynamics and change. Historical examples, including the French and Industrial Revolutions, showcase sociology's enduring interest. Perspectives from Durkheim and Marxian scholars like E. P. Thompson offer contrasting views on social movements, highlighting rational responses to societal issues. The narrative then delves into specific instances of peasant movements in India, spanning from pre-colonial times to contemporary developments, illustrating evolving objectives and methods in addressing economic exploitation and broader societal concerns.
- The significant finding from objectives Number One The provided content presents a comprehensive overview of social movements in colonial India, emphasizing their diverse ideological, cultural, and political catalysts. Key movements, such as the Indian Independence Movement, Bhakti and Sufi movements, and the Swadeshi Movement, exemplify the multifaceted nature of collective action against colonial rule. The ideological diversity within these movements, ranging from constitutionalism to radicalism, reshaped not only political structures but societal norms. The impact of activism, particularly through nonviolent civil disobedience, extended beyond political boundaries, prompting a reevaluation of traditional norms and fostering a more inclusive vision for post-colonial India. Scholarly references, including works by Bandyopadhyay, Guha, Sarkar, and Thapar, contribute to a well-founded exploration of these historical dynamics.
- According to objectives No 2 The presented content navigates the intricate dynamics of social movements in colonial India, emphasizing their pivotal role in contesting prevailing intellectual narratives and fostering transformative processes. The Indian independence movement, religious reforms, and socio-religious movements challenged colonial paradigms, reshaping intellectual discourse. Scholarly works by David Washbrook, Partha Chatterjee, Sumit Sarkar, and Ranajit Guha contribute nuanced insights into the contested narratives and the emergence of alternative knowledge systems. The symbiotic relationship between social movements and indigenous wisdom becomes evident, shedding light on the profound changes in colonial India's intellectual landscape. This analysis unravels the multifaceted impact of social movements on knowledge dynamics and their role in shaping post-colonial narratives.

- On the basis of objective Number Three The content underscores the pivotal role of social movements in colonial India in contesting and reshaping prevailing intellectual narratives, challenging Western hegemony in knowledge. Indigenous knowledge systems, deeply rooted in cultural frameworks, played a transformative role in this process, as highlighted by Dipesh Chakrabarty and Partha Chatterjee. The examination reveals the interconnected nature of societal norms, cultural expressions, and intellectual shifts during the colonial era, emphasizing how they collectively shaped evolving thought and identity. Additionally, the content emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between political landscapes and social and intellectual transformations, illustrating how they jointly fueled resistance against colonial rule and fostered alternative knowledge systems.

CONCLUSION:

The findings from the outlined objectives reveal the profound impact of social movements on colonial India's ideological, cultural, and political landscape. Firstly, the comprehensive overview illuminates the diverse catalysts within key movements, illustrating how ideological diversity, ranging from constitutionalism to radicalism, reshaped not only political structures but societal norms. Activism, particularly nonviolent civil disobedience, extended beyond politics, prompting a reevaluation of traditional norms and fostering inclusivity in post-colonial India. Secondly, the intricate dynamics of social movements in contesting intellectual narratives and fostering transformative processes are evident. The Indian independence movement, religious reforms, and socio-religious movements challenged colonial paradigms, reshaping intellectual discourse. Scholarly works contribute nuanced insights, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between social movements and indigenous wisdom, ultimately shaping colonial India's intellectual landscape. Lastly, the examination of social movements in contesting and reshaping intellectual narratives underscores the pivotal role of indigenous knowledge systems. Deeply rooted in cultural frameworks, these systems played a transformative role against Western hegemony, interconnected with societal norms, cultural expressions, and political landscapes. The findings emphasize how social and intellectual transformations jointly fueled resistance against colonial rule and fostered alternative knowledge systems. Collectively, these conclusions unveil the intricate and interconnected nature of social and intellectual transformations during colonial India, contributing to a holistic understanding of this transformative historical epoch.

In the context of the whole discussion, I would like to say these four lines-

In colonial echoes, movements' **might**,
 Ideas contested, reshaped in the **night**.
 Indigenous wisdom, a beacon's **glow**,
 Societal shifts, knowledge's ebb and **flow**.

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