

Social Media and Social Movements in the Digital Age: A Multi-Factor Analytical Framework (in the Context of South Asia: India, Nepal and Bangladesh)

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ABSTRACT:

Social movements in the 21st century are increasingly becoming multidimensional, network-based, and influenced by digital communication. While traditional social movement theories emphasize various factors—such as collective behavior, relative deprivation, resource mobilization, political opportunities, identity, and networks—fully comprehending the complexity of contemporary movements through any single theory remains a significant challenge. In this context, the present study proposes a multi-factor analytical framework for analyzing contemporary social movements. This framework integrates structural factors (social, political, economic, and cultural) with leadership, organization, and resources; the digital communication ecosystem (social media, digital networks, and mainstream media); public mobilization (encompassing public awareness, public opinion, citizen participation, and collective action); government response; and movement outcomes. Based on a qualitative and conceptual research design, the study employs

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secondary sources and analytical observation to conduct a comparative analysis of the Anna Movement, the Nirbhaya Movement (2012), the CAA protests (2019–20), the Farmers' Movement, July Uprising/Quota Reform Movement (Bangladesh-2024) Nepal's Gen-Z movement, and the CJP movement. The study reveals that there is no necessarily fixed linear or sequential relationship among these factors; rather, they interact dynamically based on the context, thereby influencing the trajectory and outcomes of the movement. The study's primary contribution is not to replace existing theories but to synthesize their complementary insights into a dynamic, non-linear, and integrated analytical framework.

Keywords: Social Movements, Multi-Factor Analytical Framework, Social Media, Digital Networks, Public Mobilization, Mainstream Media, Government Response, Collective Action.

1. Introduction

1.1 Meaning and brief introduction to the movement:

A movement refers to a concerted or semi-concerted collective effort aimed at bringing about change in economic, political, social, or cultural systems. It involves resistance against the prevailing order and seeks either to restore an old system or to transform the existing one. Movements are generally linked to the interests of a specific segment or segments of society—interests they wish to secure or advance. When a section or sections of society become dissatisfied with a government policy or decision, they resort to a movement to oppose it.

The ancient thinker Aristotle, in his book **Politics**, discussed the causes of revolution as well as measures to prevent it. In contemporary times, movements are closely intertwined with issues of inequality, rights, social justice, and democracy. "Sociologist Charles Tilly describes a social movement as a sustained and organized public effort through which collective claims are made on target authorities." [1] Sidney Tarrow views social movements as collective challenges based on common purposes and solidarity, sustained through interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities. [2] Sociologist Herbert Blumer viewed social movements as a form of collective behavior capable of

undertaking collective efforts toward changing the social order or establishing a new one. [3]

1.2 Major Types of Movements

1.2.1 Social Movements: Social movements primarily focus on eliminating widespread societal inequalities, social evils, and gender disparities, and on establishing equality within society. These movements advocate for women's empowerment and the upliftment of Dalits.

1.2.2 Economic Movements: Economic movements are concerned with fulfilling the economic interests of individuals. They address issues such as employment, minimum wages, taxation, price controls, and the right to livelihood, raising demands to the government regarding these matters.

1.2.3 Political Movements: Political movements are associated with seeking partial or complete changes in the system of governance, demanding political rights, and opposing or advocating for specific public policies.

1.2.4 Environmental Movements: Environmental movements primarily focus on environmental conservation, freedom from pollution, ecological balance, and the sustainable use of resources. Examples include the Narmada Bachao Andolan and the Chipko Movement.

1.2.5 Women's Movements: Women's movements address issues such as women's

rights, gender equality, dismantling patriarchal social structures, political participation, social security, freedom from domestic violence, and the right to education. Examples include the Nirbhaya Movement and the #MeToo Movement.

1.2.6 Farmer's Movements: Farmer's movements focus on the economic interests of farmers—such as beneficial and effective agricultural laws, Minimum Support Prices (MSP), irrigation, fertilizer availability, access to credit, and freedom from middlemen. An example is the 2020-21 Farmers' Movement.

1.2.7 Student Movements: Student movements are concerned with reforms in the education sector. They demand quality education at all levels—from primary to higher education—and address issues such as educational reforms, fee hikes, exam paper leaks, and corruption in examinations.

1.3 Meaning and Evolution of Social Media

1.3.1 Meaning of Social Media: Social media refers to a group of internet-based digital communication platforms used by individuals to send and receive content. Through these platforms, users share images, videos, voice

messages, text messages, and more with friends, relatives, and subscribers. Notable examples of social media platforms include YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, and LinkedIn. Social media creates a virtual world where the barriers of distance and time are eliminated; furthermore, it is a cost-effective medium.

1.3.2 Evolution of Social Media: The evolution of social media is closely linked to advancements in the internet and technology. Social media grew in tandem with the development of internet-based technologies. SixDegrees.com is recognized as the first social networking site (launched in 1997); this was followed by the emergence of platforms such as LinkedIn (2003), Facebook (2004), YouTube (2005), X/Twitter (2006), WhatsApp (2009), and Instagram (2010), among many others. Simultaneously, factors such

as the expansion of the internet, the development of smartphones, the rollout of 4G and 5G networks, and the availability of affordable internet services have provided opportunities for the growth and expansion of social media.

1.4 The Relationship Between Movements and Social Media

Social media has brought about extensive and significant changes in the nature, methodology, and form of 21st-century movements. Earlier movements relied primarily on newspapers, television news, posters, banners, rallies, and public meetings, and were often confined to specific regions. However, social media has transcended these geographical boundaries, elevating local movements to a global stage through posts, messages, and hashtags. While traditional movements required immense effort, money, and time to disseminate information and strategies, social media has eliminated these hurdles. It enables the highly effective sharing of movement-related information, photos, videos, and live broadcasts. Social media has become a primary medium for organizing and expanding movements. It plays a crucial role in garnering massive public support, rapidly disseminating information, fostering the participation of the common person, and influencing public opinion. Activists use social media to convey their ideas and objectives to the general public, effectively taking movements beyond local confines to a global level.

Some prominent examples of such movements include the Arab Spring, the Anna Hazare movement, the Nirbhaya movement, the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in 2019, the Farmers' Protest (2020–21), the Nepal Gen-Z protest, and the NEET paper leak protest (2026). All these movements have been nurtured and sustained by social media.

1.5 Necessity and Significance of the Study:

In the 21st century, social media has come to play a pivotal role in the nature and functioning of social movements. It performs a central function in shaping public opinion, facilitating political participation, and steering the direction of

movements. The widespread adoption of the internet and smartphones has further accelerated this process. Compared to other media, social media is far more expansive and effective.

While considerable research has been—and continues to be—conducted on the relationship between social movements and social media, the latter is a relatively recent phenomenon (emerging in the first decade of the 21st century) that is still expanding; its growing influence is significantly impacting movements. Instances have been observed where a previously dormant movement—lacking public backing—suddenly garners immense support and popularity, eventually becoming so powerful that the government is compelled to yield to its demands. Conversely, a movement that begins peacefully may suddenly turn violent. Social media enables people located thousands of kilometers away to support activists or oppose the government, its policies, and its conduct. Although this subject has been studied, there remains a lack of comprehensive and comparative analysis—a gap that is particularly evident regarding South Asian nations. Populations in South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka,

Bhutan, Afghanistan, and the Maldives) remain burdened by fundamental issues such as poor education, poverty, unemployment, inequality, inadequate healthcare, crime, and corruption; indeed, these problems are intensifying. These issues foster distrust, resentment, and a spirit of rebellion against governance, often culminating in the emergence of social movements. In this context, a comprehensive and systematic study of social media's impact on movements, as well as its influence on democracy and democratic processes, is both crucial and highly relevant. This study is significant because, while social media has strengthened and influenced democratic discourse, public political and social awareness, political participation, and the shaping of public opinion, it has—on the other hand—fueled communalism, social tension, disinformation, the formation of negative public opinion, fake news, and trolling. Therefore, this analysis will prove useful for policymakers, scholars, researchers,

and others.

1.6 Research Objectives:

The main objective of this research is a holistic and analytical study of the impact of social media on the main social and political movements of the 21st century in the context of South Asia. To achieve the objective of this research, the following objectives have been set:

1. To study the nature and characteristics of the major political and social movements of the 21st century.
2. To evaluate the role and impact of social media in major movements of South Asia.
3. To study the negative and positive effects of social media on the movements.
4. To examine the impact of social media on citizen participation and public opinion formation in the context of movements.
5. To explore suggestions to make social media effective and responsive.

1.7 Research Questions:

1. What is the difference between the movements of the 21st century and the earlier movements?
2. What is the role of social media in the major movements of South Asia?
3. How does social media influence public opinion formation through movements?
4. What are the positive and negative effects of social media on movements.
5. Can social media be made accountable and effective and what will be the solutions?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Major Theories of Social Movements:

Various scholars have propounded distinct theories regarding the origins, evolution, and impact of social movements, addressing aspects such as their nature, potential, contextual circumstances, and behavioral patterns. The key theories associated with these movements are as follows:

2.1.1 Collective Behavior Theory: Herbert Blumer and Neil Smelser are prominent figures among the proponents of Collective Behavior Theory. According to this theory, a social movement emerges when there is a collective demand for change driven by societal tension, discontent, and structural transformations. Collective Behavior Theory views movements as a specific form of collective behavior.[4] The 2012 Nirbhaya movement in India and the Gen-Z movement in Nepal serve as apt examples of this.

2.1.2 Relative Deprivation Theory: Ted Robert Gurr is the key proponent of this theory. Gurr posits that when individuals or groups perceive that the opportunities, rights, and resources they desire are unavailable to them, they become dissatisfied; this situation lays the groundwork for a social movement. The theory holds that psychological discontent acts as the driving force behind a movement.[5] The farmers' movement—in which farmers demanded rights and resources—serves as an example of this.

2.1.3 Resource Mobilization Theory: This theory was propounded by John McCarthy and Mayer Zald. It emphasizes the importance of the effective use of available resources. The theory argues that discontent alone is insufficient for a movement's success; rather, the efficient and effective utilization of available resources—such as organization, leadership, communication channels, funds, and public support—is essential.[6] In contemporary times, social media serves as a significant resource within this framework. For instance, the Anna Hazare movement made effective and efficient use of social media, which had a positive impact on the movement.

2.1.4 Political Process Theory: Doug McAdam is the proponent of this theory. It emphasizes the availability of opportunities, effective leadership, and strong organization as key factors for a movement's success.[7] The Anna Hazare movement serves as an example of this theory. Government corruption during the movement presented an opportunity, and Anna Hazare ensured the movement's success by building a

strong organization and providing effective leadership.

2.1.5 New Social Movement Theory: This theory was developed by Alain Touraine and Alberto Melucci. According to this theory, new movements are not limited merely to economic issues; rather, they focus on matters such as human rights, identity, the environment, gender inequality, and culture.[8] The recent 'Save Aravalli' movement and the 'MeToo' movement are examples of this.

2.1.6 Network Society Theory: The primary proponent of this theory is Manuel Castells. Castells holds the view that advancements in communication technology have transformed society into a network-based system. Social media empowers people to gather on digital platforms, exchange views, and elevate movements from a local context to a global scale.[9] For instance, the 'MeToo' movement began as a protest against the exploitation of women, and social media transformed it into a global phenomenon.

2.2 Previous Studies on Digital Activism

Over the past two decades, numerous scholars have conducted research and studies on digital activism, examining how social media has influenced movements, public participation, and the shaping of public opinion.

- □ Manuel Castells (2012), in his work *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, described the significant role of network-based social media in imparting new momentum to movements. Digital networks are highly effective in mobilizing support, gathering and organizing people, and facilitating the exchange of information.[10]
- □ Bennett and Segerberg (2015), in their book *The Logic of Connective Action*, described the concept of "Connective Action," noting that individuals do not need to join a formal organization to participate in a movement; instead, they can engage actively through social media.[11]

- □ Zeynep Tufekci (2017), in her book **Twitter and Tear Gas**, explained that while social media is capable of rapidly organizing movements, such organization tends to remain confined to the online realm and is often short-lived.[12]

The aforementioned studies indicate that digital activism has provided social movements with a new dimension and universal reach. However, comparative analysis of 21st-century movements within the South Asian context remains limited. This research gap underscores the necessity and relevance of the present study.

3. Social Media and Public Opinion Formation in India

In contemporary times, social media has emerged as a highly influential medium for shaping public opinion. Users utilize social media to exchange information, express their views, discuss public issues, and engage in political discourse. It is far more accessible and effective than any traditional medium.

Social media has eliminated the barriers of distance and time; individuals can instantly chat with or message friends, relatives, and followers. It is also significantly more cost-effective than other media channels. Leveraging these attributes, political parties and leaders use social media to sway public opinion in their favor and undermine their opponents. Strategies such as hashtag campaigns, live broadcasts, online discussions, and online surveys regarding various political issues are employed to shape public opinion. Social media serves as a potent tool for election campaigning, particularly because the majority of its users are young—including many first-time voters; consequently, in constituencies where the margin of victory is narrow, social media campaigns can prove decisive. To influence public opinion, political parties sometimes post false, misleading, or offensive content; the public often mistakes this material for the truth, thereby altering their perspectives. While the lack of stringent laws allows the perpetrators to escape accountability, public opinion is inevitably influenced. However, the

impact of social media on public opinion is not always positive; issues such as trolling, fake news, propaganda, and bias also shape public sentiment. Thus, it can be concluded that social media exerts both positive and negative influences on the formation of public opinion.

4. Proposed Multi-Factor Framework

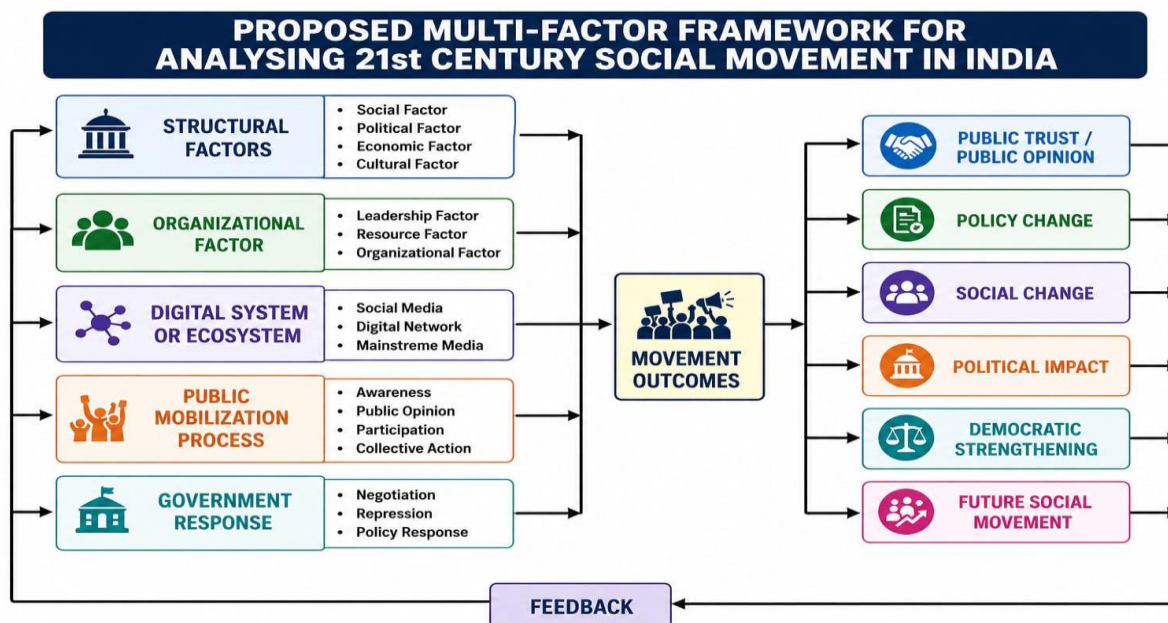
4.1 Why is a new framework (model) needed?

Compared to the movements of the 20th century, there has been a massive change in the movements of the 21st century. The expansion of digital technology, Internet and social media has given a new direction to the progress, organization, functioning, public opinion formation, participation, communication media etc. of the movements. Although theories like Political Process Theory, Resource Mobilization Theory, Network Society Theory, New Social Movement Theory and Public Sphere Theory have explained the nature, development and functioning of movements, all these theories emphasize only on some specific factors. For example, Political Process Theory considers political opportunities as important, Resource Mobilization Theory gives importance to resources and organizational capacity. Network Society Theory explains social movements centered on digital networks and information flows, Public Sphere Theory explains democratic discourse. All the theories have certainly played an important role in the explanation of social movements, but in contemporary movements, there is a lack of analysis of the combined effect of socioeconomic, political, media, governance system, organizational, leadership, main stream media, response of the administration, topic or issue of the movement.

There is no single factor responsible for the success or failure of Anna Hazare Movement-2011, Nirbhaya Movement 2012, CAA protest movement 2019-20, Farmers Movement 2020-21, Nepal Gen-Z Movement 2025, CJP Movement 2026 etc. In these movements, factors like organization, leadership, main stream media, governance system, position of the government, public opinion and participation, reaction of the

administration etc. interact with each other and definitely influence the outcome of the movement. Neither a movement can be successful nor unsuccessful on the strength of any one factor, but it is certain that one of these factors can have a greater impact on the movement and can intensify the movement by increasing the speed of the movement and the public support it receives.

4.2 Multi-Factor Framework Design



4.3 Framework Components

This framework is primarily based on six components that are closely interrelated and describe the nature, evolution, direction, and outcomes of 21st-century movements. There is no fixed sequence for these factors; their order may shift depending on the circumstances. For instance, in the Anna Hazare movement, organizational formation preceded information dissemination, whereas in the Nirbhaya movement, information dissemination occurred first, followed by the formation of the organization. All these factors interact with one another.

Various Factors of the Framework

4.3.1 Organizational Factors: These encompass all factors crucial for organizing a social movement, providing leadership, utilizing

Keeping this research gap in mind, this study proposes "Multi-factor Framework for Analyzing 21st Century Social Movements in South Asia". This model is an attempt to present a complete, multidimensional, Indian context-specific analysis of social movements by coordinating the insights gained from all the previous theories.

resources effectively, and establishing coordination among participants. These factors determine the movement's direction, its sustainability, and its overall effectiveness.

The three sub-factors of organizational factors are as follows:

(i) Leadership: Leadership is essential for defining the movement's objectives, goals, direction, and strategy. It involves aspects such as vision, decision-making, coordination, and motivation. For instance, the Anna Hazare movement had a crystal-clear vision; the organization made timely decisions, maintained coordination among all members, and continuously motivated the participants.

(ii) Organizational Capacity: This refers to the operational capability of the organization. It includes elements such as coordination among

members, communication systems, planning and strategy, volunteer management, and institutional support. For example, during the Farmers' Movement, the Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) established synergy among various farmer organizations and facilitated the continuous exchange of information; the organization formulated strategies, managed volunteers, and provided institutional support to the movement.

(iii) Resources: Resources are vital for the success of any movement. They include human resources, financial resources, information, technology, and physical resources. For instance, resources played a crucial role in sustaining the Farmers' Movement over a long period. During the movement, arrangements for food, financial aid, information dissemination, and coordination—facilitated by social media teams and volunteers—played a pivotal role in driving the movement forward.

4.3.2 Structural factors: Structural factors are the most significant elements, encompassing the social, political, economic, and cultural conditions that serve as the foundation for initiating and developing a movement. These four factors generate discontent, create opportunities, and highlight the need for change, thereby establishing the basis for collective action.

(i) Social factor: These factors foster discontent and a desire for change among the people. They include social inequality, caste and class systems, gender inequality or discrimination, education, awareness, population dynamics, and social change. Examples include the Nirbhaya movement and movements related to reservation policies.

(ii) Political factor: Government policies and the political system can also serve as the cause and foundation for a movement. Key elements include government policies and decisions, political opportunities, rights and freedoms, governance accountability and transparency, as well as elections and party politics. An example is the Anna Hazare movement, which sought to make the government accountable and bring

transparency to governance. Government corruption acted as a catalyst, and government policies and decisions played a crucial role in gaining momentum for the movement.

(iii) Economic factor: Economic issues often evolve into movements. Key economic factors include unemployment, inflation, income inequality, poverty, and agriculture-related issues. An example is the farmers' movement, where farmers demanded changes to improve their economic conditions.

(iv) Cultural factor: Cultural factors are primarily linked to identity. Key elements include language, religious and cultural identity, traditions, customs, and collective identity. An example is the language preservation movement, frequently seen in India. Prioritizing Hindi over local languages often fuels such disputes.

4.3.3 Digital Communication Ecosystem:

The digital communication ecosystem refers to the environment in which digital communication takes place—specifically, a setting where social media, mainstream media, and digital networks collectively foster civic engagement, shape public opinion, facilitate information dissemination, and inspire collective action. In the 21st century, the digital communication ecosystem has become a primary determinant in shaping the various activities of social movements.

(i) Social Media: Social media is the fastest and most impactful medium for the exchange of information. It serves as perhaps the most crucial and influential element for modern movements.

The roles of social media in movements include: disseminating information, promoting the movement, connecting people to the movement, helping to shape public opinion, digital activism, and the use of hashtags.

For instance, from the Arab Spring in 2010 to movements occurring today, social media has remained a key and influential factor in spreading the movement, building public opinion, and fostering participation.

(ii) Digital Network: Digital networks refer to the various digital platforms through which

people connect with one another. This process does not occur physically but takes place via online mediums—such as YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram channels, Instagram, Facebook, and email.

Role of Digital Networks:

- ☐ Coordination
- ☐ Information exchange
- ☐ Connecting activists
- ☐ Communicating plans to activists
- ☐ Example: During the CJP movement of 2026, digital networks were used to connect activists, coordinate their efforts, and convey plans to them.

(iii) Mainstream Media: Mainstream media refers to national news channels, newspapers, and radio. It is worth noting that mainstream media and social media influence each other and are, in turn, influenced by one another.

Role of Mainstream Media:

- Giving the movement reach and recognition
- Agenda-setting
- Facilitating the exchange of information between the government and the public

4.3.4 Public Mobilization: Public mobilization is the process through which the public forms opinions or views regarding a political, social, economic, or cultural issue or problem and participates in collective action to bring about desired changes aligned with those views.

(i) Public Awareness: This is the initial stage of a movement. Public awareness encompasses: knowledge of the issue, understanding the gravity of the problem, gathering information via social or other media, and the development of civic consciousness. For example, following the Nirbhaya incident (2012) in Delhi, people became aware of the issue of women's safety and treated it with seriousness. Information regarding the movement was gathered through mainstream and social media, fostering the development of civic consciousness.

(ii) Public Opinion: Public opinion is formed when the public develops a stance on a specific issue or subject. It comprises elements such as public deliberation, online and offline discussions, media debates, social media trends, and the collective view of citizens. For instance, during the Anna Hazare movement, there was extensive public discourse on corruption; widespread online and offline discussions took place, and open debates regarding corruption and the movement occurred in the media. Social media trends favored the movement, and people collectively formed their opinions.

(iii) Citizen Participation: Citizen participation represents a stage beyond opinion formation, where people actively engage in action. It includes activities such as rallies and demonstrations, online and offline signature campaigns, volunteering, financial support, and sharing information about the movement on social media. For example, during the Farmers' Movement (2020–21), farmers participated in rallies and demonstrations. They advanced the movement's campaign through both direct and digital channels, disseminating information via social media.

(iv) Collective Action: Collective action is the most significant and active form of a movement. It includes actions such as sit-ins (dharnas), demonstrations, marches, boycotts, "Satyagraha", and collective protests. For instance, simultaneous protests erupted across the country during the IAC movement, taking the form of collective action. In public mobilization, information transforms into civic consciousness, thereby shaping public opinion; this opinion drives collective action and plays a pivotal role in social and political change. This process is a key determinant of a movement's success or failure.

4.3.4 Government Response: Government response refers to the administrative, legal, political, and policy-related actions adopted by the government during social movements. The government's reaction significantly influences the movement; factors such as its future trajectory, intensity, legitimacy, and ultimate outcome are heavily shaped by how the government responds.

Key Elements of the Government's Response

(i) Negotiation: This refers to the situation where the government attempts to engage with protesters and resolve the issue through dialogue. For instance, during the farmers' protest and the Anna Hazare movement, the government held multiple rounds of talks with farmers' organizations and Anna Hazare's team.

(ii) Repression: This refers to the situation where the government attempts to suppress the movement. The government justifies this action on the grounds of maintaining law and order. Under repression, the government takes measures such as imposing Section 144, shutting down the internet, arresting protesters, and employing police action—including lathi-charges, the use of tear gas and water cannons, and the installation of barricades. For example, during the CJP protest on July 20, the government attempted to suppress the movement by employing all these measures.

4.3.5 Policy Response: In this scenario, the government alters its policy—that is, it accepts either all or some of the protesters' demands. The government takes actions such as enacting new laws, repealing existing laws, constituting committees to resolve issues, amending policies or legislation, or removing individuals from office. For instance, during the farmers' protest, the government repealed the three farm laws; under pressure from the Nirbhaya movement, it constituted the Justice Verma Committee and amended criminal laws; and during the CJP protest, it acceded to the protesters' demands and secured the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

4.3.6 Movement outcomes: Movement outcomes refer to the direct and indirect effects that emerge as a result of a movement. These manifest as social, political, economic, or policy changes. The outcome indicates the extent to which a movement succeeded or failed, and the degree to which it transformed or influenced governance, society, and the prevailing system. Movement outcomes encompass the following:

(i) Policy Changes: As a result of the movement, the government alters a policy, law, or aspect of its governance system. For instance, due to the Anna Hazare movement, the government was compelled to introduce and pass the Lokpal Bill in Parliament.

(ii) Social Change: This relates to transformations that influence societal consciousness, social behavior, and collective attitudes. Social changes include: increased awareness, shifts in social thinking and perspectives, heightened sensitivity towards civil rights, and greater social participation. For example, the MeToo movement raised awareness among women, altered societal mindsets and perspectives, and increased societal sensitivity regarding women's rights.

(iii) Policy Impact: Here, the social movement influences the political system and the governance process. This includes: changes in electoral issues and public opinion, the emergence of new leadership, shifts in the strategies and ideologies of political parties, and increased political engagement among citizens. For instance, the emergence of new leadership (the Aam Aadmi Party) followed the Anna Hazare movement.

(iv) Democratic Strengthening: Movements strengthen democracy. Indeed, if a movement remains non-violent, is free from the influence of opposing forces, and benefits specific sections of society without causing harm to others, it undoubtedly strengthens democracy and fosters citizen participation. Key elements include: transparency, accountability, civic participation, public discourse, and the strengthening of public institutions. A movement is not limited merely to its demands; it brings about social, economic, and political changes that influence social consciousness, political processes, public opinion formation, and even democratic institutions. Therefore, a movement should not be evaluated solely by the fulfillment of its demands but rather by its broader impacts.

(v) Feedback and the Movement: Feedback reveals the opinions held by those not directly

participating in the movement. Those providing feedback include ordinary citizens, experts, and individuals positively or negatively affected by the movement. Feedback also serves as a guide for future movements, indicating what actions should be taken to ensure success and which ones should be avoided. Examples include:

- Developing new strategies for the movement.
- Effectively utilizing social media and other platforms.
- Organizing and advancing the movement.
- Changes in the behavior of citizens and the government.

5. Research Design and Methodology

The present study is based on a qualitative research approach and adopts a conceptual research design. It involves the critical analysis and synthesis of secondary data, literature, theories, etc., and constructs a multi-factor framework for the study of social movements.

5.1 Research Design: Quantitative and Conceptual Research Design.

5.2 Nature of Study: Exploratory, Analytical, and Comparative Research.

5.3 Data Source: Secondary Data (Books, Journals, Government Reports, Newspapers, Credible Online Sources).

5.4 Method of Analysis: Content Analysis, Comparative Analysis, and Thematic Analysis.

6. Application of the Framework:

6.1 Case 1: The Anna Movement (India Against Corruption, 2011)

In 2011, widespread discontent grew among Indian citizens due to rampant corruption within the Indian governance and administrative systems—exemplified by scandals such as the 2G spectrum allocation, the Commonwealth Games, and the Adarsh Housing Society scam. It was against this backdrop that the 'India Against Corruption' (IAC) movement, led by Anna Hazare, was launched. The primary demand of the India Against Corruption movement was the

enactment of the Lokpal Bill.[13],[14]

Application of the proposed Multi-Factor framework.

6.1.1 Structural factors:

- Social:** Public dissatisfaction with corruption.
- Political:** Lack of transparency and accountability in governance and administration.
- Economic:** Misuse of resources (public resources).
- Cultural:** Neglect of honesty and ethical governance.

6.1.2 Organizational factors:

- Leadership:** Leadership by Anna Hazare, Kejriwal, Kiran Bedi, Yogendra Yadav, Ashutosh, etc.
- Organizational Capacity:** Coordination of India Against Corruption (IAC).
- Resources:** Donations, volunteers, public support, digital platforms.

6.1.3 Digital Communication Ecosystem:

- Social Media:** Advancing the movement through WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter.
- Digital Network:** Messages, emails, and a network of online activists.
- Mainstream Media:** TV news channels and newspapers.

6.1.4 Public Mobilization:

- Public Awareness:** Widespread awareness on the issue of corruption.
- Public Opinion:** Public opinion in support and favor of the Lokpal.
- Citizen Participation:** Demonstrations, rallies, protests, and online campaigns across the country.

- Collective Action:** Massive public protests at Ramlila Maidan and other states.

6.1.5 Government Response:

- Discussions with protesters.

- Formation of a joint committee for the Lokpal Bill.

- Introduction of the Lokpal Bill in Parliament and its extensive discussion.

- Finally, the passage of the Lokpal and "Lokayuktas Act 2013".

6.1.6 Movement Outcomes:

- Corruption became a central issue of discussion in Indian politics.

- Enactment of the Lokpal Act.

- Formation of the new political party, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

- Increased citizen political participation and increased digital use.

6.1.7 Analytical Observation: An analysis of the Anna Hazare movement or the IAC movement reveals that the success of a movement does not depend solely on a single factor. This movement was not solely influenced by one or two factors, but rather by a number of other factors that interacted with each other, shaping the movement and influencing its outcomes. This study makes it clear that the proposed multi-factor framework has the potential to provide a holistic, comprehensive, and effective analysis of 21st-century movements.

6.2 Nirbhaya Movement (2012)

The incident involving the gang-rape and murder of a young woman in New Delhi on December 16, 2012, caused such profound anguish across the country that the entire nation took to the streets, raising issues such as the justice system, women's safety, gender equality, justice for the victim, and severe punishment for the perpetrators. Social media and national media propelled the issue beyond the confines of the capital, transforming it into a nationwide cause that soon evolved into a massive public movement. The issue proved so impactful that the BJP even utilized it during elections (slogan: "Bahut hua mahilao par atyachar, abki bar Modi Sarkar").[15]

Application of the proposed Multi-factor Framework

6.2.1 Structural factor:

- Social factor:** Rising criminal incidents against women, gender inequality, and societal concern regarding women's safety.

- Political factor:** Questions raised regarding law and order; criticism and opposition directed at the government concerning women's safety.

- Economic factor:** The need for women's economic independence, safe transportation, and secure public spaces.

- Cultural factor:** The patriarchal structure of society, conservative mindsets, and societal attitudes towards women.

6.2.2 Organizational factor:

- Leadership:** This was a movement without a single leader; various entities—such as student unions, women's organizations, and civic groups—participated and drove the movement forward.

- Organizational Capacity:** Protests

were coordinated by civil society, women's organizations, and universities.

- July Uprising / Quota Reform Movement, Bangladesh (2024)Resources:** Social organizations, volunteers, public cooperation, and digital platforms.

6.2.3 Digital Communication System:

- Social Media:** WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms.

- Digital Networking:** Online campaigns, and information exchange and coordination via digital mediums.

- Mainstream Media:** 24/7 coverage by national news channels and newspapers, making the movement a subject of national discourse.

6.2.4 Public Mobilization:

- Public Awareness:** Widespread awareness regarding issues related to women's safety.

- Public Opinion:** Public sentiment favoring the

demand for robust laws against the exploitation of and crimes against women.

•**Citizen Participation:** Significant participation from youth, students, women's organizations, and the general public.

•**Collective Action:** Massive protests at Jantar Mantar, India Gate, and in other cities across India.

6.2.5 Government Response:

•Formation of the Justice J.S. Verma Committee following the incident.

•Enactment of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

•Efforts to comprehensively reform measures related to women's safety.

6.2.6 Movement Outcomes:

•Following this movement, women's safety became a key issue in public discourse.

•Necessary amendments were made to criminal laws.

•Increased societal awareness regarding gender equality, gender justice, and women's rights.

•Growth of a culture of democratic protest, criticism of the government, and citizen participation.

6.2.6 Analytical Observation: An examination of the Nirbhaya movement reveals that leadership in social movements is not always formal. While the movement was propagated through media and social media—with factors like organization and coordination emerging later—it also displayed a decentralized (or dispersed) leadership rather than a centralized one. The study of the Nirbhaya movement demonstrates the efficacy of the multi-factor framework in analyzing such movements and highlights that the sequence and relative importance of various factors can vary.

6.3 Anti-CAA Movement (2019-20)

Following the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in December 2019, public reactions in support and opposition to the

law began in India. While some sections of society supported the Act, others opposed it. A prolonged anti-CAA movement was held in Shaheen Bagh, Delhi, in protest against this law. Social media and mainstream media played a significant role in disseminating information, debate, and opinions related to this movement.[16]

Application of the proposed Multi-factor Framework

6.3.1 Structural factors:

•**Social factors:** Concern for citizenship and social inclusion, activism of civil and social groups, and significant participation of women and youth.

•**Political factors:** Constitutional and political debates raised by the provisions of the CAA, questions related to citizenship, secularism, and equality, and disagreement with the government regarding citizenship policies.

•**Economic factors:** This movement was not based on economic factors, but some social groups participated economically.

•**Cultural factor:** Issues or ideas related to the Constitution, secularism, and Indian identity became part of the debate within this movement. The civic and cultural identities of certain communities influenced the nature of the movement.

6.3.2 Organizational factor

•**Leadership:** The movement lacked a central leadership and was led by various civic groups, women's groups, student groups, and civil society organizations in various locations.

•**Organizational Capacity:** The work of organizing the movement, coordinating activists, and organizing events was done at the local level.

•**Resources:** Civil society participation, volunteers, digital platforms, support and financial assistance from local communities.

6.3.3 Digital Communication Ecosystem

•**Social Media:** Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp were used to

disseminate information, ideas, and information related to the CAA.

•**Digital Network:** WhatsApp and other digital media were used to connect and coordinate among protesters and share information at the local level.

•**Mainstream Media:** Newspapers and television channels amplified the movement's discourse nationally.

6.3.4 Public Mobilization

•**Public Awareness:** Public discussion began on all the provisions and implications of the CAA.

•**Public Opinion:** Various opinions began to form and deteriorate on issues related to citizenship, secularism, equality, and the Constitution.

•**Citizen Participation:** Women, students, social organizations, civil society, etc. participated in the movement.

•**Collective Action:** Dharnas, demonstrations, marches, public meetings, peaceful protests, etc. were organized in various cities.

6.3.5 Government Response: The government responded to this movement with the following:

•Attempts by the administration to negotiate with protesters.

•Steps taken by the administration and police to effectively maintain law and order.

•Public communication to articulate and clarify the provisions of the CAA and the government's intentions.

•The CAA was challenged in court.

6.3.6 Movement Outcomes:

•Outcomes of the anti-CAA movement include:

•Widespread discussion and debate on the issue of citizenship and constitutional values.

•Increased public discourse on the Constitution, citizenship, and secularism.

•Increased social media-based political discourse and digital activism.

•Prolonged public and political discussion and debate on the provisions and implementation of the CAA.

6.3.7 Analytical Observations:

Analysis of the anti-CAA movement reveals that current movements do not develop in a fixed or linear order. In this movement, organizational capabilities, structural conditions, digital communication, mass mobilization, and government responses have interacted with each other, shaping the movement's direction, nature, and form. Social media and digital networks, in particular, have played a crucial role in disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and increasing citizen participation. An important finding in this movement is that government response was not the final stage after the movement, but rather a changing factor throughout the movement. This study supports the multi-factor framework's belief that social movements are the result of a dynamic interaction of various factors, and the order of these factors can vary across movements.

6.4 Farmers' Protest (2020)

The Central Government passed three farm laws in 2020. Following the enactment of these laws, farmers' organizations from states including Haryana, Punjab, and Western Uttar Pradesh launched a protest against them. The protesters intended to enter Delhi and demonstrate at Jantar Mantar; however, the government halted them at Delhi's borders—specifically the Singhu, Ghazipur, and Tikri borders. The protesters established their protest sites at these borders and sustained the agitation on a large scale for an extended period. The primary objective of the movement was to secure the repeal of the three farm laws.[17][18]

Application of the proposed Multi-factor Framework

6.4.1 Structural factors:

•**Social factors:** Widespread concern among farmers regarding the agricultural system and their livelihoods; collective unity among farmers' organizations and rural communities;

cooperation among various farmers' organizations.

•**Political factors:** Disagreements between the government and farmers over the three farm laws; issues concerning agricultural policy and the political representation of farmers.

•**Economic factors:** Concerns regarding fair prices for agricultural produce, price security, and the economic status of farmers.

•**Cultural factors:** Socio-cultural consciousness linked to agriculture and farmer identity; a sense of collective solidarity within rural communities.

6.4.2 Organizational factors:

•**Leadership:** Instead of being led by a single individual, the movement involved the collective participation of various organizations and leaders. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) played a pivotal role in coordinating among the numerous distinct organizations.

•**Organizational Capacity:** Coordination among various farmers' organizations; the capacity to sustain the protest over a long period; the creation of organizational networks at local and regional levels.

•**Resources:** Volunteers; arrangements for food and other essential supplies; financial support; transportation/logistics; and the network of farmers' organizations.

6.4.3 Digital Communication:

•**Social Media:** Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram were utilized to disseminate information, speeches, videos, and other updates related to the movement.

•**Digital Network:** WhatsApp, e-mail, and other digital platforms played a crucial role in facilitating information exchange and coordination among protesters and supporters.

•**Mainstream Media:** News channels, newspapers, and other media outlets widely disseminated information regarding protest events, negotiations between farmers and the government, and the discourse surrounding the movement to a broader audience.

6.4.4 Public Mobilization:

•**Public Awareness:** Widespread public discussion began regarding the three farm laws and their potential impact on agriculture.

•**Public Opinion:** Public opinion began to take shape regarding the farm laws, MSP, and farmers' rights.

•**Citizen Participation:** Various civil society groups and organizations extended their support, either directly or indirectly.

•**Collective Action:** Prolonged sit-ins at

all Delhi borders, tractor rallies, 'Bharat Bandh' (nationwide strikes), and protests

at various locations.

6.4.5 Government Response:

•**Negotiation:** The government held multiple rounds of talks with the farmers.

•**Administrative/Restrictive Response:** The police administration took several measures to maintain law and order.

•**Policy Response:** After approximately one year, in November 2021, the government repealed the three farm laws.

6.4.6 Movement Outcomes:

•**Policy Outcome:** The repeal of the three farm laws was a major policy achievement.

•**Social Outcome:** Fostered solidarity among farmers and encouraged widespread discourse on farmers' issues.

•**Political Impact:** Issues related to farmers, farmer participation, and government-farmer relations became central topics of political discourse.

•**Democratic Outcome:** The prolonged peaceful collective protest, negotiations, and policy response demonstrated the power of democratic pressure and civic participation.

6.4.7 Analytical Observation:

An analysis of the farmers' movement reveals that organizational capacity and digital communication complement each other in the

social movements of the current century. In this movement, pre-existing farmer organizations and their networks provided the foundation for collective mobilization, while digital platforms facilitated the dissemination of information, the expansion of networks, and the broadening of public discourse. Furthermore, widespread mass mobilization and sustained agitation shaped the negotiations with the government and, ultimately, the policy-making process. This case supports the premise of the proposed multi-factor framework that the outcomes of a movement are not determined by a single factor but emerge from the dynamic interaction of various structural, organizational, digital, social, and political factors.

6.5 July Uprising / Quota Reform Movement, Bangladesh (2024)

Background

The student movement, which began with demands for quota reform, transformed into a widespread mass movement in July 2024, ultimately leading to a major political crisis and a change of government in August 2024.[19][20]

6.5.1 Structural Factors

- ☐ **Social:** Dissatisfaction among youth and students regarding employment and opportunities.
- ☐ **Political:** Growing discontent with government policies and governance.
- ☐ **Economic:** Limited employment opportunities and high competition.
- ☐ **Cultural:** Youth political consciousness, participation, and digital culture.

6.5.2 Organizational Factors

- ☐ **Student Leadership:** Students led and provided direction to the movement.
- ☐ **Student Networks & Coordinating Groups:** Student networks played a role in coordinating the movement.
- ☐ **Volunteer and Supporter Networks:** Volunteers and supporters expanded the reach of the movement.

- ☐ **Protest Coordination & Resource Mobilization:** Protests were organized, and resources were mobilized.

6.5.3 Digital Communication Ecosystem

- ☐ Dissemination of information and calls to protest via social media.
- ☐ Coordination of protesters across different locations through digital networks.
- ☐ Influence of mainstream media on the movement's visibility and the political narrative.

6.5.4 Public Mobilization

- ☐ **Student Awareness:** Widespread awareness developed among students regarding the quota system and employment issues.
- ☐ **Broad Public Opinion:** Widespread public opinion was generated in support of the movement.
- ☐ **Citizen Participation:** Citizens from various sections of society joined the students in the movement.
- ☐ **Large-scale Collective Action:** The movement took the form of large-scale demonstrations, rallies, and mass protests.

6.5.5 Government Response

- ☐ **Government/Administrative Response:** A curfew was imposed, the army was deployed, and restrictions were placed on public movement and gatherings.
- ☐ **Security Forces' Action:** Security forces used force, made arrests, and took action at various locations to control the protesters.
- ☐ **Internet/Communication Restrictions:** Restrictions or disruptions to internet and mobile communication occurred during the agitation, affecting digital communication.
- ☐ **Political and Institutional Crisis:** As

the agitation expanded, political instability increased, eventually escalating into a severe political crisis.

6.5.6 Movement Outcomes

- **Changes to the Quota Policy:** Modifications to the quota system resulted in most positions being filled based on merit.
- **Widespread Political Movement:** The quota movement evolved into a massive anti-government mass movement.
- **Change of Power:** Sheikh Hasina resigned and left the country on August 5, 2024.
- **Change in Political System:** An interim government was formed following the change of power.

6.5.7 Analytical Observation

Bangladesh's July Uprising/Quota Reform Movement (2024) demonstrates that contemporary social movements cannot be understood based on a single factor alone. The movement began with dissatisfaction regarding the quota system, but political, social, and economic grievances gradually became intertwined with it. Throughout this process, social media and digital networks played a crucial role in disseminating information, coordinating protests, and garnering widespread public support.

In this movement, student organizations and networks, digital communication, and public mobilization appear deeply interconnected. The confrontation between the government and the protesters further shaped the trajectory of the movement, causing it to evolve beyond the initial demand for quota reform into a broader push for political change.

This case clearly illustrates the dynamic and non-linear nature of your proposed framework. There was no fixed sequence of events involving structural factors, organizational factors, digital communication, public mobilization, and the government response; instead, these factors

interacted with one another to influence the movement's direction and outcome.

Thus, the Bangladesh case reinforces the idea that social media is not merely a communication tool but has become a crucial factor influencing mobilization, network formation, public opinion, and political pressure in contemporary social movements. Furthermore, it demonstrates how an initial issue can transform into a broad political movement over time, ultimately leading to significant political outcomes.

6.6 Nepal's Gen-Z Movement (2025)

In September 2025, Gen-Z youth launched a widespread movement against the government. The primary causes were rampant corruption, lack of political and administrative accountability, and a flawed administrative system; these factors fueled such deep discontent among the youth that they initiated a massive protest in response. Upon the movement's inception, the government attempted to quell it by banning several social media sites.[21]

Application of the proposed Multi-factor Framework

6.6.1 Structural factors:

•**Social factors:** Intense dissatisfaction among Gen-Z regarding the governance system; demands by youth for political and administrative accountability; and the new generation's (Gen-Z) call for greater public and political participation.

•**Political factors:** Issues concerning corruption, transparency, and accountability; dissatisfaction with the incumbent government and the prevailing governance system; and the government's policy regarding social media.

•**Economic factors:** Youth concerns regarding employment and economic opportunities, alongside extreme economic inequality within society.

•**Cultural factors:** Gen-Z's distinct digital culture. Youth culture characterized by immediate engagement or dissent regarding political and social issues (in their own unique style), rapid digital expression on public and

political matters, and swift collective participation and response.

6.6.2 Organizational factors:

- Leadership:** Absence of centralized political leadership; the movement was driven by youth networks and decentralized leadership.
- Organizational Capacity:** Informal digital networks played a pivotal role, while formal political organizations remained marginal.
- Resources:** Digital platforms, online networks, volunteer participation, and networks of youth communities.

6.6.3 Digital Communication Ecosystem:

- Social Media:** Social Media emerged as the most critical medium for information exchange, deliberation, political expression, and participation during the movement.
- Digital Networks:** Youth utilized digital networks to connect with one another and exchange information.
- Mainstream Media:** Initially, mainstream media viewed this movement with suspicion. During the coverage of this movement, private media houses focused more on the government's authoritarian attitude, whereas state-run media placed greater emphasis on maintaining law and order and seeking a resolution to the crisis within the existing system.[22]

6.6.4 Public Mobilization:

- Public Awareness:** The issues of the movement were conveyed to broad youth communities through digital platforms, raising awareness among them.
- Public Opinion:** Social Media fostered public debate and discourse regarding the political system and government policies.
- Citizen Participation:** Youth participated in the movement in large numbers via online platforms and engaged in movement-related activities.
- Collective Action:** Youth participation across digital networks and social media rapidly evolved

into a collective protest (movement).

6.6.5 Government Response:

- Use of Force:** Lathi-charges, water cannons, tear gas, and rubber bullets were used to disperse protesters.
- Curfew and Restrictive Orders:** Curfews were imposed around the Presidential Palace, Parliament, and other government institutions.
- Ban on social media.**
- Administrative measures to maintain law and order.**

6.6.6 Movement Outcomes:

- Government Resignation:** Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli resigned from his post due to pressure from the movement.
- Interim Leadership:** Former Chief Justice and experienced, popular leader Sushila Karki was appointed as the acting Prime Minister.
- Dissolution of Parliament:** The House of Representatives was dissolved.
- Lifting of Social Media Ban:** The ban imposed on social media was lifted.
- 10-Point Agreement:** A 10-point agreement was reached between the government and Gen-Z leaders, addressing issues such as corruption, administrative failure, and electoral reforms.
- Constitution Reform Commission:** Paved the way for the formation of a commission to review the constitution and governance system.
- Global Inspiration:** The movement inspired future youth movements and those occurring elsewhere in the world, such as the Gen-Z movements in Madagascar and Morocco.
- Widespread debate on digital rights and freedom of expression.**
- A new example of Gen-Z-led political mobilization.**
- Creation of a new discourse regarding the role of the younger generation in Nepalese politics.**

6.6.7 Impact of Nepal's Gen-Z movement on India and China

China's Stand: Nepal is critically important from China's perspective. The quick developments unfolding during the Gen-Z movement were closely monitored by China. It had always believed that institution of monarchy was the safest and reliable partner for securing its core interests. Tibet being the Paramount factor in determination of China Nepal ties, So Nepal turning into Republic was challenging for China and it had to quickly recalibrate its Nepal policy. Being successful in this effort through developing close relationship with political parties particularly communists. This movement has again disturbed Chinese strategic calculus regarding Nepal. Now the major worrying factor is the unconventional nature of this movement and how things will move on in post movement phase. As success of this movement portrays total rejection and apathy towards established political parties. China as mature player followed the diplomatic courtesy of delivering congratulatory message to Mrs. Karki (interim P.M.) While emphatically maintaining its regular stand of closely working with new government through active engagements in diverse fields conforming with the spirit of Panchsheel.

India's Stand: India was keenly observing the Gen-Z protest in Nepal and was perturbed due to movement taking violent trajectory. So, it urged for the cessation of violence and hoped that all stakeholders will derive solution to this crisis through constructive engagement. India was cautious not to get entangled in Nepal's political dynamics and learning from the previous experiences where it was portrayed in negative manner. So, India appreciated formation of interim government and expressed its desire to work with new government for progress and development.

6.6.8 Analytical Overview:

Nepal's Gen-Z movement presents a particularly significant example for the multi-factor framework. In this movement, digital networks, social media, and youth-led decentralized

participation appear more crucial than traditional organizational structures. Digital communication and social media have played a pivotal role—extending far beyond mere information exchange—in shaping public opinion, building networks, and facilitating collective mobilization. A study of Nepal's Gen-Z movement reinforces the notion that, in contemporary movements, organizational factors do not invariably precede digital ones; in certain circumstances, digital networks themselves become the foundation for organization and mobilization. Thus, the multi-factor framework makes it easier to understand that there is no fixed sequence of factors and that these factors are characterized by dynamism and mutual interaction.

6.7 The CJP Movement:

On May 15, 2026, the Chief Justice of India (Surya Kant) remarked during a hearing that some unemployed youths are like cockroaches—finding neither employment nor a place in any profession. He noted that some of them become RTI activists or other types of activists and then begin attacking everyone. Later, the Chief Justice clarified that his statement was directed at those holding fake degrees; however, his remark laid the groundwork for a movement. In response, Abhijit Dipke posted on social media, suggesting that if the system views them as cockroaches, they should all unite on a single platform. Thus, the term "cockroach" transformed from an insult into a symbol of the movement. Social media handles and websites were created under the name "Cockroach Janta Party," garnering immense support from the youth. Rapidly, this reaction evolved into a full-fledged movement that spread across India, including a major protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. The movement's key issues included paper leaks and irregularities, administrative accountability and transparency, unemployment, and a demand for the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Ultimately, under pressure from the movement, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigned, although the government maintains that his resignation was based on moral grounds.[23][24]

6.7.1 Structural factors:

•**Social factor:** Dissatisfaction with the current system among unemployed youth and students preparing for exams; anxiety regarding exams and the future; and a sentiment of opposition to the status quo alongside a desire for political expression.

•**Political factor:** Student dissatisfaction and disagreement with government policies regarding the examination system and education; the NEET paper leak controversy; demands for political accountability and transparency; and calls for the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

•**Economic factor:** Rising unemployment and limited job opportunities; student reliance on competitive examinations; and issues of economic insecurity concerning education and employment.

•**Cultural factor:** Youth Culture – rapid and intense collective expression by youth on political and social issues. Digital Culture – use of digital platforms for social and political expression. Participatory Culture – youth engagement in political and social activities, both online and offline.

6.7.2 Organizational factors:

•**Leadership:** Instead of a centralized leadership structure, the CJP movement advanced through a network of representatives from the movement and active youth.

•**Organizational Capacity:** Coordination among protesters; planning of sit-ins at Jantar Mantar; organizing marches to Parliament; and arranging delegations for dialogue with the government.

•**Resources:** Activists or volunteers; digital networks; social media; support from sympathizers; protest venues; and collective resources.

6.7.3 Digital Communication:

•**Social Media:** In the initial stages of the CJP movement, social media played a crucial role in disseminating information about the movement's

activities, objectives, and demands. Despite limited

coverage by mainstream media, social media enhanced the movement's visibility and public engagement. As the movement gained more space on digital platforms, its scope and reach expanded, thereby vastly widening the public sphere associated with the movement.

•**Mainstream Media:** The role of mainstream media in the CJP movement appears as a significant dynamic process. Initially, the movement received limited media coverage; however, following its popularity, visibility, and public support on social media, mainstream media also began reporting on all activities and events related to the movement. During this period, questions were raised or allegations made within mainstream media discourse regarding the movement's funding and potential external sources. Thus, media coverage was not limited to merely disseminating information; it also became a medium for constructing competing narratives concerning the movement's legitimacy and nature.

•**Digital Network:** Digital networks were utilized to exchange information and coordinate activities related to the movement among the youth and supporters.

6.7.4 Public Mobilization:

•**Public Awareness:** Public awareness regarding the CJP movement's demands, objectives, and issues concerning the youth expanded—first through social media and subsequently through mainstream media.

•**Public Mobilization:** Public discourse emerged around issues such as the NEET exam leak, the examination system, the education system, and political accountability. Throughout this period, the education system, examination processes, and the issue of paper leaks remained central topics of discussion, extending from the streets to the Parliament.

•**Citizen Participation:** Youth, students, and other supporters participated through both online and offline channels.

•**Collective Action:** Moving beyond digital expression to direct collective action, including sit-ins at Jantar Mantar,

marches to Parliament, protests, and meetings with the government.

6.7.5 Government Response: The government and administration's response to the movement was evident at multiple levels.

•**Administrative Response:**

a. Use of lathi-charges, water cannons, and tear gas against protesters during the march to Parliament.

b. Suspension of internet services by the administration.

c. Registration of FIRs against some protesters.

•**Negotiation:** Meetings between the government and CJP representatives to discuss the movement's demands.

•**Political Response:** Resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. Two distinct narratives emerged from this movement: on one hand, the CJP maintained that the government was compelled to accept Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation due to the pressure exerted by the movement, viewing it as a victory for the CJP and the students; on the other hand, the government held the view that Pradhan resigned on moral grounds.

6.7.6 Movement Outcome:

•**Political outcome:** The resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan was a major political outcome of the movement, although the CJP and the government hold differing views regarding the reasons behind it. Government-Movement Dialogue: Meetings between the CJP and the government to discuss the movement's

issues constituted a significant outcome.

•**Legal/Administrative Outcome:** The administration withdrew the FIRs registered against the protesters.

•**Protest outcome:** The CJP called off the

movement following discussions with the

government regarding their demands and the receipt of assurances.

•**Public outcome:** The movement played a crucial role in bringing issues such as the examination system, the education system, unemployment, political accountability, and youth-related concerns to the forefront of broad public discourse.

6.7.7 Analytical Observation:

The CJP movement offers a highly significant contemporary example for the proposed multi-factor framework. The movement's backdrop reveals various social and political factors—such as unemployment, the examination system, political accountability, and the aspirations of the youth. Social media and digital communication played a pivotal role in disseminating information, building networks, and mobilizing the youth. While mainstream media coverage was initially limited, it expanded significantly once the movement's reach and popularity became evident.

This movement demonstrates a bidirectional relationship—rather than a one-way interaction—between social media and mainstream media. While mainstream media provided extensive coverage, competing narratives also emerged regarding the movement's funding, as well as instances of violence and hate speech by protesters. Thus, the spheres of social media and mainstream media became arenas not merely for information exchange but also for shaping the movement's legitimacy, public opinion, and competing narratives. As the movement progressed, digital engagement evolved into direct collective action, including sit-ins at Jantar Mantar and a march to Parliament. Subsequently, confrontations between the police and protesters, along with negotiations between the movement's representatives and the government, became key factors influencing the movement's trajectory. Ultimately, the outcome was determined by Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation, negotiations between CJP representatives and the

government, and the announcement that the movement was ending—though the government and the CJP held differing interpretations regarding the resignation.

This case supports the core premise of the proposed multi-factor framework: that factors such as structural elements, organization, digital communication, public mobilization, and government response are crucial in social movements, yet they do not necessarily follow a fixed or linear sequence. Depending on the circumstances, one factor may become active before another, and one factor can influence another. The CJP movement specifically demonstrates that digital networks establish a dynamic relationship between public opinion, media coverage, narrative construction, and collective action.

7. Discussion

A comparative study of the social movements included in this research reveals that the nature of 21st-century social movements is multidimensional and dynamic. The origins, expansion, trajectory, and outcomes of these movements cannot be fully understood through any single factor or theoretical perspective. Factors such as organization, leadership, resources, social media, digital platforms, mainstream media, mass mobilization, and governmental and administrative responses interact with social, economic, political, and cultural conditions, profoundly influencing the movements. This study proposes a multi-factor framework to understand this interplay.

7.1 What do existing theories suggest?

7.1.1 Resource Mobilization Theory: Resource Mobilization Theory considers organizational capacity and resources to be essential and critical for the success of social movements. The role of organizational capacity and resources in the Anna Hazare movement and the farmers' movement illustrates the utility of this perspective. However, in the digital age, "resources" are not limited to physical or organizational assets; they also encompass digital networks and online communication.

7.1.2 Collective Behavior Theory: This theory views social movements as collective responses arising from shared discontent, social tension, and situations where large numbers of people react in unison against a problem, a government decision, or a policy. The relevance of this theory is particularly evident in movements like the Nirbhaya movement, where widespread public outrage over a specific incident rapidly transformed into mass protests. The intense collective response of the youth in Nepal's Gen-Z movement can also be understood through this same lens. However, in the digital age, it is insufficient to view social movements merely as spontaneous collective responses, as digital networks, organizational capacity, leadership, and strategic communication also play pivotal roles.

7.1.3 Relative Deprivation Theory: This theory posits that when individuals or groups perceive a disparity between their expectations and their actual circumstances, discontent arises, which subsequently evolves into collective action. The utility of this perspective is clearly demonstrated in the farmers' movement, the Gen-Z movement, and the CJP movement, where the perceived gap between expectations—whether social, economic, political, or opportunity-related—and the prevailing reality played a significant role in fueling discontent. However, deprivation alone does not fully explain the emergence of a movement; additional factors such as organizational capacity, leadership, communication networks, and mobilization capacity may also be necessary to transform discontent into collective action.

7.1.4 Political Process Theory: Political Process theory considers political opportunities, political structures, state responses, and the interaction between the movement and the state as crucial factors in the development of social movements. According to this theory, opportunities available within the political system, the state's response, and the nature of political institutions influence the direction and outcome of a movement. The government response and the interaction between the state and the movement in instances such as the Farmers' Movement, the CAA

movement, and the CJP movement demonstrate the utility of this theory. Notably, a government's response can either weaken a movement or, at times, expand its scope. However, this perspective does not fully encompass the impact of contemporary movements within the digital communication ecosystem or the influence of social media on public opinion and narrative construction.

7.1.5 New Social Movement Theory: Moving beyond traditional economic class struggles, New Social Movement theory views identity, culture, values, rights, and collective identity as the primary foundations of social movements. This theory is useful for understanding movements such as the CAA protests, the Nirbhaya movement, and the Nepal Gen-Z movement, where issues concerning civil rights, identity, gender justice, youth identity, and democratic values were paramount. Participants in contemporary movements do not mobilize solely for material or economic gains; they also raise issues related to recognition, dignity, identity, and rights. However, New Social Movement theory does not fully explain the structure of digital networks or the evolving nature of mobilization and narrative construction facilitated by social media.

7.1.6 Network Society Theory: Manuel Castells' Network Society theory elucidates the growing importance of networked communication, information flows, and digital connectivity in contemporary society. Digital networks can connect people across geographical boundaries for social and political mobilization. This perspective is particularly useful for understanding the role of social media and digital networks in movements such as the Anna Hazare movement, the Farmers' Movement, the Nepal Gen-Z movement, and the CJP movement. In these movements, digital platforms influenced information dissemination, network formation, public visibility, and collective mobilization. Nevertheless, network connectivity alone does not explain the structural conditions that gave rise to a movement, how the organization evolved, or how the government's response influenced the

movement's outcome.

7.1.7. Public Sphere Theory: Habermas's public sphere perspective emphasizes the importance of public deliberation, communication, opinion formation, and democratic discourse regarding social and political issues. In contemporary times, social media has provided new platforms for public discourse where citizens express their views on social, political, and economic matters. Social media played a significant role in shaping public opinion and discourse during movements such as the Anna Hazare movement, the CAA protests, the farmers' protest, and the CJP movement. However, the contemporary digital public sphere is not entirely deliberative or egalitarian; it can also be characterized by issues such as competing narratives, misinformation, polarization, and unequal visibility. Therefore, viewing social media solely as a democratic public sphere is insufficient.

7.2 Comparative Interpretation:

A comparative study of the aforementioned theories reveals that each theory contributes significantly to understanding a specific dimension of social movements. Collective Behaviour Theory emphasizes collective reactions and social tension; Relative Deprivation Theory focuses on grievances; Resource Mobilization Theory centers on organizational resources; Political Process Theory highlights political opportunities and state responses; New Social Movement Theory focuses on identity and culture; Network Society Theory emphasizes digital networks; and Public Sphere Theory focuses on public deliberation and opinion formation. In contemporary social movements, these dimensions do not operate in isolation but rather interact with one another.

7.3 Why is a framework needed?

A comparative study of the selected cases revealed that it is inappropriate to consider any single factor as the universal starting point for a movement. While organizational capacity was crucial in some movements, digital networks accelerated mobilization in others. Similarly, in

some instances, mainstream media provided widespread visibility to the movement, whereas in other cases, mainstream media covered the movement only after social media had already popularized it.

•Anna Hazare → Mainstream Media + Social Media.

•Farmers' Movement → Organization + Digital Network.

•Nepal Gen-Z → Digital Network + Youth Mobilization.

•CJP → Social Media + Mainstream Media.

7.4 How does this framework differ from existing theories?

1.Multi-dimensional approach: The framework considers social, political, economic, cultural/organizational, and digital factors collectively, rather than overlooking any of them or treating them in isolation.

2.Non-linear nature: The framework does not present a fixed, sequential process. In other words, the progression does not always follow the order of Structure → Organization → Digital → Mobilization; the sequence could also be Digital → Mobilization → Organization.

3.Dynamic interaction: All factors influence one another. For example, both "Government Response → Movement Dynamics" and "Movement → Government Response" are possible.

7.5 comparative discussion of six cases

Case	Important Factors	Driving
Anna Hazare Protest	Corruption Leadership	+
Nirbhaya Movement	Social Grievance Public Outrage	+
CAA Protest	Political Issue Resources	+
Farmer's Protest	Organization Resource	+

Nepal Gen-Z Movement	Youth + Digital Network
CJP Movement	Youth + Education System + Exam Issue

A comparative analysis reveals that the factors present in these movements—and the roles they played—were not uniform. In some movements, the organizational factor was paramount; in others, it was digital communication or structural grievances; elsewhere, the government's response shaped the direction of the movement.

7.6 Theoretical Contribution

The present study proposes a multi-factor analytical framework to understand contemporary social movements in the digital age. The objective of this study is not to replace existing theories but to integrate their key insights into a unified and dynamic framework.

•**The expanded role of social media:** Social media is not merely a medium for the exchange of information; it serves as a platform for communication, mobilization, the shaping of public opinion and narrative construction.

•**Social Media Mainstream Media Interaction,**
Social Media Mainstream Media.

•**A comprehensive understanding of movement outcomes:** Outcomes are not limited to mere success or failure; they encompass:

- 1.Policy change
- 2.Government concessions
- 3.Leadership change
- 4.Public opinion
- 5.Political participation
- 6.New political identity
- 7.Institutional change

There may be various other outcomes as well.

7.7 Conclusion of Discussion:

Overall, the comparative study demonstrates that contemporary social movements are

multidimensional, dynamic, and context-dependent. Their evolution cannot be adequately understood through any single factor—whether grievances, resources, political opportunities, or digital communication. The proposed multi-factor framework centers on the interaction among these various dimensions and acknowledges that the role of specific factors, their intensity, and the sequence of emergence can vary across different movements.

8. Policy Implications:

The proposed multi-factor analytical framework suggests that, rather than viewing the contemporary law and order situation merely as a law-and-order issue, it is essential to understand its social, economic, political, organizational, and digital dimensions. Based on this, the following policy implications emerge:

8.1 For the Government:

The government should strengthen institutional grievance redressal mechanisms to identify early signs of social movements and citizen discontent in a timely manner. Public opinion and citizen grievances emerging on digital platforms should not be viewed merely as misinformation or law-and-order issues; instead, their underlying social and political causes must be analyzed. In the event of a movement, priority should be given to dialogue, transparency, and a timely response. Furthermore, administrative actions must be proportionate and consistent with democratic rights.

8.2 For Media:

Media should give priority to accuracy, neutrality and source verification in reporting social movements. Instead of presenting allegations related to funding, leadership or motive of a movement as fact, their sources and evidence should be made clear. Instead of focusing only on the conflict and sensational aspects, the media should also give adequate space to the real demands and social background of the movement. Especially in the digital age, the media will have to understand its role of Narrative Construction and Agenda-Setting with more

responsibility.

8.3 For Civil Society:

Civil society organizations can play a role in facilitating dialogue and mediation between social movements and the government. They should assist in bringing the issues faced by youth and other marginalized groups to institutional platforms. Additionally, it is essential to promote the responsible use of digital platforms, fact-checking, and peaceful democratic participation. Civil society can strengthen the democratic legitimacy of movements while also encouraging evidence-based advocacy.

8.4 For Political Parties:

Instead of viewing social movements merely as electoral opportunities or tools for political opposition, political parties should seek to understand the genuine grievances of citizens. There is a need to enhance youth political participation, strengthen internal democracy, and integrate emerging digital political identities into the political process. Political parties should focus on fostering constructive political communication rather than using social media to spread misinformation or fuel polarization.

8.5 Brief Conclusion:

Thus, a more responsive, transparent, and participatory relationship among the government, media, civil society, and political parties is essential for the effective democratic management of contemporary social movements. The proposed framework helps these stakeholders understand that a social movement is not merely an act of protest but a process of continuous interaction among society, digital communication, public opinion, political institutions, and the state.

9. Conclusion

The nature of contemporary social movements is becoming increasingly complex, network-based, and multidimensional compared to traditional movements. Through a comparative analysis of the Anna Hazare movement, the Nirbhaya movement, the CAA protest movement, the

farmers' movement, Nepal's Gen-Z movement, and the CJP movement, this study has sought to understand how social, economic, political, cultural, organizational, and digital factors influence the dynamics of these movements.

9.1 Major findings:

The study primarily found that understanding any contemporary social movement based on a single factor is insufficient. Factors such as structural grievances, leadership, organization, resources, digital networks, social media,

mainstream media, public opinion, collective action, and government response operate with varying intensities and in different combinations across various movements.

A significant conclusion of the study is that there is no fixed or linear sequence among these factors. In one movement, an organization might develop first while digital communication becomes crucial later; in another, digital networks might accelerate collective mobilization before an organizational structure takes shape. Notably, in contemporary movements, social media has not merely served as a tool for disseminating information but has also influenced network formation, mobilization, public opinion, and narrative construction. Furthermore, the relationship between social media and mainstream media often appears to be bidirectional.

9.2 Contribution of the Study:

The primary theoretical contribution of this study is the proposal of a multi-factor analytical framework. This framework does not claim to replace existing social movement theories; rather, it seeks to integrate their complementary insights into a unified analytical structure. Through this framework, social movements are understood in terms of structural factors, organizational factors, the digital communication ecosystem, public mobilization, government response, and movement outcomes. A key characteristic of this framework is its dynamic, non-linear, and interaction-based nature; it acknowledges that various factors can influence one another and

that their relative importance may shift across the different stages of a movement.

9.3 Limitations of the Study:

This study has certain limitations. First, the number of cases selected is small and does not represent the full spectrum of contemporary social movements, nor does it cover social movements from across the globe. Second, the study relies primarily on secondary sources, media reports, digital content, and existing literature; consequently, it lacks primary survey data or large-scale empirical data. Third, when examining the role of social media, it is difficult to fully capture available online data, platform-specific limitations, and evolving digital algorithms. Furthermore, given the varying contexts and political circumstances of the different movements, any direct comparison of their outcomes must be approached with caution.

9.4. Future Research

The proposed framework can be tested through empirical research in future studies. Relationships between various factors can be examined using surveys with large samples, interviews, social media analytics, content analysis, and statistical techniques such as SPSS. Future research could also conduct a comparative analysis of the roles played by Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (Twitter), and other emerging digital platforms. Additionally, comparative studies of social movements across different countries could be undertaken to observe how the framework functions within diverse political systems and social contexts.

9.5 Final Conclusion

Ultimately, this study argues that an integrated, multi-factor, dynamic, and non-linear analytical approach—rather than a single theoretical lens—may be more useful for understanding social movements in the digital age. The proposed framework represents an initial analytical contribution in this direction, which will be further developed and tested through future empirical and comparative studies.

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