

**Organising for Social Change: A Dialectic Journey of Theory and Praxis.** 2006. Michael J. Papa, Arvind Singhal and Wendy H. Papa (ed.). New Delhi: Sage Publications. pp. 297. Rs. 360.

Social change is a slow but steady and continuous process and either induced or not induced by the state policies. It is need-based and definitely led by socially enterprising personalities. The process of social change often recognises the contradictions and paradoxes that exist in the society. The blurb of the book is apt while elaborating that the social change is more often a non-linear, circuitous and dialectic process than linear and dualistic. The book is the result of the authors' prolonged research on communication studies especially highlighting the research studies they undertook in India, Bangladesh and obviously in USA as part of their official location. The social entrepreneurs studied by the authors have made their business to change the world by benefiting the *voiceless*.

The book is divided into six chapters and each chapter again has several subsections followed by a conclusion.

Chapter 1 discusses in detail the departure in approach to organising for social change. This chapter in detail establishes the fact that dialectics has developed the science to a new extent and could essentially be successful in social organisation also. With numerous examples cutting across the ages and areas, authors have elaborated the fact that every invention and change in science has occurred in a non-linear fashion and social change also occurs in the same fashion.

Chapter 2 to 5 describe the case studies of different countries related to the people's organisation which actively are taking part in social change. These four chapters discuss the dialectic of four different organisations and the dialects are classified as

- Dialectic of Control and Emancipation
- Dialectic of Oppression and Empowerment
- Dialectic of Dissemination and Dialogue
- Dialectic of Fragmentation and Unity

Dialectic of Control and Emancipation is described in Chapter 2 with an example of Grameen Bank, the famous micro-finance group of Bangladesh. The chapter has a brief but illuminating description on the process of initiation and conceptualisation of banking for the poor by Md. Yunus. After receiving the Nobel Peace Prize everyone is aware of Md. Yunus's

initiatives but Papa and Singhal give an account of the inception this pathbreaking social engineering process as well as the functioning of the 'Grameen Bank'. In this chapter the authors theorise the dialectic of control and emancipation practised by the members of the Grameen Bank by surrendering some personal freedom in order to gain the access to the resource of the collective.

Dialectic of Oppression and Empowerment similarly tells the story of the National Dairy Development Board engineered by Verghese Kurien. Dr. Kurien is rightly described by the authors as the *doodhwala* of India. The book describes him as the visionary architect of the White Revolution – a state of self-sufficiency in milk production in India. Currently 112, 590 village level district cooperative societies with some 12.1 million dairy farmers, of which 2.9 million are women, are networked. While describing the empowerment the authors identified the simultaneous experience of oppression. The chapter brings out the caste dynamics operative in a cooperative and the internalisation of a belief of incompetence among the women

Chapter 4 draws the context from the authors inspiring investigation on impact of edu-entertainment (E-E) radio soap opera in two different Indian villages. The value added messages spread through two soap operas named 'Tinka Tinka Sukh' and 'Taru' deal with a Dialectic of Dissemination and Dialogue. The dissemination of the message on illegality of dowry system was very effectively spread though the opera called *Tinka Tinka Sukh*'. Lessons from *Tinka Tinka Sukh* suggested that E-E programme can spark social change. *Taru* was a 52-episode soap creating enabling environment for dialogue. It is interesting to note that in spite of high applause for these uniquely designed projects the authors have mentioned that social change is not linear and group resistance must have been experienced by those favouring the change.

Chapter 5 draws our attention towards judicious use of two contradictory words in the dialect, i.e. fragmentation and unity. The first part of the chapter describes the feature of dialectic of unity while the second part describes the dialectic of fragmentation. The dialectic of unity and fragmentation as experienced by Michael and Wendy Papa while working as a volunteer in organising the Friday night supper for the poor and homeless is contextualised in this chapter. The building process of unity, they argued could start by making the task participatory rather than disassociating the poor and homeless from the simple process of arranging the community supper. Good Work Inc. has practised that experience in

rural Appalachia in USA. Unity was built by using some selflessness in the services and embodied spirituality among the members to maintain social order and social norms. In spite of meaningful community building the disconnection in communication between the volunteers from college students and the homeless poor was glaring from the examples cited by the authors. The chapter argues that conversation will not help to disseminate the tension created by fragmentation and dialogue is required between the groups. They have also argued that if any programme emphasises only the unifying factors notwithstanding the fragmentation within and between the members, they will perpetuate only the status quo.

In their concluding remarks in Chapter 6, the authors summarise the case studies. They also explicate four principles valued in complexity science by taking an example of the peace negotiation process between Uganda and Sudan. The chapter explains that four different dialects are explored in four different organisational contexts. However, each organisation has praxis of all four dialects to some extent which explains the existence of simultaneous dialectic tensions in a process of social change and understanding that dialect is essential to unfold the process of social change in a community. While concluding the book, six suggestions are mentioned. The authors probably did not number them consciously, as these suggestions could not be prioritised in a sequence of numbers.

Overall this book unfolds the grey area in the process of social change. Earlier the explanations were mostly dualistic between two extremes like powerful or powerless, etc. approach of analysis was either bottom-up or top-down. This book is an essential deviation to understand that social change is a continuous dialectic process embedded with inevitable contradictory tensions. The book's comprehensive text provides easy and enjoyable reading, apart from providing a scholastic account on the subject.

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