CHAPTER- III

CIVIL SOCIETY AND CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

Revolutions are brought forth by citizens who are dissatisfied with the political system and it is this dissatisfaction which culminates into a common interest, thereby binding the people together towards the pursuit of a common goal changing the existing system. The Egyptian Revolution (2011) was same as other revolutions the world had witnessed; it was the result of a growing awareness among the people that they had a right to demand a political system which was more responsive to their needs and aspirations. This right which has been asserted by citizens from time to time particularly under totalitarian or authoritarian regimes constitutes the central element behind the emergence of civil society. The best expression of this right can be found in the social contract theories of the liberal political philosophers like John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Locke in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1680) views the government as a creation of a contract entered into by the people with the condition that if it steps out of line then the people will have the right to discard it. Locke claimed that, "all legitimate government is derived from the consent of the people; that men are naturally equal, and that no one has a right to injure another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions; and that no man in civil society, ought to be subject to the arbitrary will of others That kings and princes, magistrates and rulers of every class, have no just authority but what is delegated to them by the people; and which, when not employed for their benefit, the people have always a right to resume, in whatever hands it may be placed."[1]

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[1]See for details John Locke as quoted by Gregory Claeys, *Thomas Paine: Social and Political Thought*, Washington University, p. 8, http://www.thedivineconspiracy.org/Z5227D.pdf

For Locke unlimited sovereignty was unnatural and therefore he bestowed upon the people the right to overthrow the government if it does not uphold the rights and liberties of the individuals. Jean Jacques Rousseau also stress along similar lines by stating in The Social Contract (1762) that the government is a creation of the 'general will, thereby placing the consent of the people as central in the creation or establishment of the government, moreover, the people are vested with the legitimate right to change the government if it does not conform to the 'general will. For Locke and Rousseau, the most important stage in the social contract theory is the passage from the state of nature to the civil society. Both the two political philosophers view this stage as representing the people in their most rational capacities as they are able to unite together for their common good or common interest which would ensure a safe and peaceful life. The establishment of the government is viewed as an initiative of the citizens and to change the government it is crucial that the citizens revert back to the stage of civil society whereby the existing government is dismissed and a new government is established on the consent of the people. Civil society is alternately viewed as a source of legitimacy and stability for government and as a source of resistance against arbitrary, oppressive, and authoritarian governments.[2]

History has shown from time to time that even the most oppressive political regimes can be brought down by the people by reasserting the centuries old idea that men and women have the right to create their own government. According to a recent study by the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East of the United Nations, "If there is a

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[2]See for details Robert C. Post and Nancy L. Rosenblum, *Civil Society and Government*, http://www.press.princeton.edu/chapters/i7214.html

political revolution going on throughout the world, it is what might be called the participation explosion." [3]

While the Solidarity Movement in Poland, Eastern Europe during the 1980s put the concept of civil society in the contemporary political scene, it was revived in the 21st Century with the recent Arab Spring (2011- 2012). Although in reality, while democratic systems are more prone to creating environments that are more conducive to the emergence of civil society even non-democratic political systems can also provide suitable settings for the emergence of civil society.

In spite of the difficulty in forming a concrete universal definition of civil society, it can be broadly defined as the arena or space for accomplishing common goals. As civil society progresses it become a kind of aspiration shorthand for ideas of equality, participation and public fairness. [4] One important feature of the Egyptian Revolution was the participation of a large number of concerned citizens in the protests whose participation was formed out of collective consciousness born of collective discontents towards the regime in the period leading up to the Revolution. Civil society provides a platform to the citizens in two ways firstly; it acts as an arena where the people can voice their opinions in order to take part in the decision making process, a process prevalent in most democratic systems. And secondly, it provides an opportunity for citizens to take their discontentment to another level which is toppling of the existing system and replacing it with a more responsive and transparent system as is found in most non democratic regimes. Whatever maybe the approach of civil society, it provides the

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[3]See Economic Commission for Asia and Far East as quoted by Norman Wangert, *Citizen Participation: Practice in Search of a Theory,* Natural Resources Journal, Vol. 16, p.1. http://www. lawlibrary.unm.edu/nrj/16/1/02_wengert_citizen.pdf

[4] See for details Carolyn M. Elliot, *Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader*, (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1st Edition, 2003), p. 3.

citizens an independent domain of free social life where neither governments nor private markets are sovereign. And it is in this sphere that citizens learn how to channel their dissatisfactions towards more positive outcomes.

3.1. Concept of Civil Society

The concept of civil society occupies an important place in political theory; its ideas of collective action, common interest and citizen participation have occupied a central area of interest to many political philosophers and theorists. It was popularised in the later part of the 20th Century on account of the increasing theoretical attempt to link the concept of an independent civil society with the Third Wave of Democratization[5] in the Third World countries. These theories were invariably applied to the emergence of civil society movements under authoritarian regimes in the Communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe along with Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. With the 'revivification of civil society' in the 21st Century on account of the Arab Spring where civil society played a dominant role in the Revolution the concept of civil society was re-introduced into the contemporary political scene with emphasis on certain terms like 'vibrant or robust civil society,' 'radical models of civil society' and 'active citizen participation.'

Civil society is mostly viewed as a creation of the Western Liberal thought. It was only during the late 1970s and 1980s that the idea of civil society became popular amongst the radical left who were agitating against the authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and Latin America. The idea of civil society appealed to them as it provided a

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[5]Third Wave of Democracy: Termed by Samuel P. Huntington in his book 'The Third Wave: Democratization in the last Twentieth Century' (1991). He proposes that there are three basic periods of democratization throughout the world. The First Wave during the 19th Century, the Second Wave after WWII and the Third Wave from the mid 1970s till now and deals with the democratization of the Third World countries. Samuel P.Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Last Twentieth Century*, (University of Oklahoma Press, USA, 1993).

base for reconciling democracy with socialism. In these usages, 'civil society' is used to designate a conception richer than 'constitutional representative democracy', it is seen as a supplement and not a substitute to the perceived illegitimacies of this system.[6] This view helped the left radicals to overcome their antagonism towards civil society and allowed them to revive doctrines of popular sovereignty. Even in the West, the language of civil society which till the later part of the 20th Century remained a dormant concept was picked up by the western intellectuals of various political persuasions to articulate their discomforts with modern society and government which were unresponsive to the needs of the people.[7] Civil society accordingly provided a common ground for the radical left and the liberals with its emphasis on collective action towards common goals.

According to the Social Contract theorists, civil society symbolizes a realm where the citizens can come together to pursue their common goals or interests. They postulate that the formation of the state is dependent upon the prior creation of a civil society; for them civil society represents the realm where rational decisions based on the pursuit of the common good are arrived at by the citizens. The rationality factor is based on the assumption that the consensus arrived at in relation to the pursuit of common good leading to the subjugation of the selfish interests reflects a higher level of moral duty that only rational beings are capable of performing. Morality consists in the set of rules governing behaviour that rational people would accept, on the condition that others accept them as well.[8] For Jean Jacques Rousseau the pursuit of the collective good signifies the rational capacity of men, "the passage from the state of nature to the civil

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[6] See for details Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani, *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, (Cambridge University Press, UK, 1st Edition, 2001), p. 16.

[7] See Carolyn M. Elliot, "Civil Society and Democracy: A Reader," Note 6, p.2.

[8] See for details Vipulashan, *Social Contract Theory*, March 2013, http://www.studymode.com/essays/Social-Contract-Theory-1511007.html

society produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct and gives his actions the morality they had hitherto lacked."[9]

Both Thomas Hobbes and John Locke also shares similar outlook in regard to the equation of the subjugation of the selfish interests with the rational self. Locke argued that rationality is not a prerogative of Western civilisation, but characteristic of behaviour even in the simplest forms of social organisation.[10] Locke further states that, "a civilized society was not an essentially systematic entity; it was simply an aggregation of civilized human beings that is a society of human beings who had succeeded in disciplining their conduct." [11]

Hobbes also resonates on similar grounds by affirming that the suppression of the selfish interests in favour of civilized self interests is simply the outcome of the act of the ideally reasonable man. For Hegel citizens enter into civil society to pursue their own selfish needs and interests, a space where individuals establish social bodies for the pursuit of their particular interests. Nonetheless, these associations are more than the sum of individual egos; it is the space where "individuals can and must learn to think and behave as a body, thus being forced to overcome their self centred perspectives."[12] Consequently, civil society is presented as a moral community held together by ideas of utility, sympathy and voluntary association. For Jűrgen Habermas civil society is an area

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[9]See Jean Jacques Rousseau as quoted by J. C. Johari. *Principles of Modern Political Science*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1989, p.117.

[10]See for details Robert Layton, *Order and Anarchy: Civil Society, Social Disorder and War*, (Cambridge University Press, UK, 2006), p. 6.

[11] See Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilnani, "Civil Society: History and Possibilities,"Note 6, p. 19.

[12] See for details David Armstrong, Valeria Bello, Julie Gilson and Debora Spini*, Civil Society and International Governance: The Role of Non- State Actors in Global and Regional Regulatory Frameworks*, (Routledge Politics, New York, 2011), p. 18.

where ideas, interests and values are formed and voiced and made politically effective.[13] It is considered as the space of organised activity voluntarily undertaken, distinct from the government and the market. The sphere of civil society is accordingly taken to be located somewhere between the family and the state, and which lies in the public sphere. The term public sphere is essentially defined as the realm where private persons deliberate on public matter, public for example, can mean (1) state related, (2) accessible to everyone, (3) of concern to everyone, and (4) pertaining to a common good or shared interest.[14] The public sphere is seen as an area in social life where individuals can come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through that discussion influence political action. Based on the rationale that the pursuit of the common good is in general located in the public sphere, it becomes quite apparent that the sphere of civil society would seemingly fall within that sphere. Civil society is therefore understood as the arena for public deliberation where people and organisations discuss common interests, develop solutions to society's most pressing problems and ideally reconcile differences peacefully.[15] Civil society thus symbolizes a sphere of pluralism, "the existence of a social realm between private lives and the political arena a civil society," [16] Sektengesellschaft (sect-like society) which Max Weber described as the best form of associational life for his Berufsmensch (modern self/ moral agent).

The location of civil society in the public sphere raises the question regarding the role of the state in civil society. The debate on state and civil society has divided the political

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[13] See for details Jűrgen Habermas as quoted by Simone Chambers and Jeffrey Kopstein, *Civil Society and the State,* The Oxford Handbook of Political Theory, Oxford University Press, 2009 – 2011, p.3, http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com

[14] See Carolyn M. Elliot, Note 6, p. 96.

[15] See for details Suw Charman Anderson, *Making the Connection: Civil Society and Social Media*, (Carnegie UK Trust, 2010), p. 6.

[16] See for details Sung Ho Kim, *Max Weber's Politics of Civil Society*, (Cambridge University Press, UK, 1st Edition, 2004), p. 69.

philosophers and theorists into two groups those who advocate the role of the state in civil society and those who advocate for assigning an autonomous sphere to civil society. The importance of the regulatory role of the state is stressed by Friedrich Hegel who defined civil society as "a sphere situated between the family and the state, inhabited by individuals and associations."[17] However, Hegel did not assign an autonomous sphere to civil society, rather on the contrary he asserts that the state should supervise and control civil society. Hegel's 'statist' approach to civil society is based upon his understanding of civil society as an arena where the individual interests converge and the aim of civil society is taken to signify the pursuit of these individual interest. Consequently, in the pursuit of these individual interests there are bound to be certain conflicts as some interests would be forwarded while some would be blocked. On account of this, Hegel proposes a supervisory role for the state to avoid general unrest which might result from the pursuit of the self interests. Moreover, the state is considered as the only institution which can change the citizens into proper citizens, capable of thinking and acting in universal terms. The conservatives on the other hand, support this view from a quite different perspective. For them civil society is an important element in the democratic system; it is an institution within the state which can help in strengthening the state apparatus. Civil society is viewed as part of the state system which reinforces the democratic system firstly, by educating the citizens on the basic principles of democracy which would in turn produce an informed citizenry, thereby, promoting greater civic participation, an essential element in a maintaining a strong and stable democratic system. Secondly, by promoting constructive dialogue between the state and the citizens

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[17] See Friedrich Hegel as quoted by Henrik Berglund, *Civil Society in India: Democratic Space or the Extension of Elite Domination?,* Stockholm University, Department of Political Science, 2001, http://www.sasnet.lu.se/EASASpapers/34HenrikBerglund.pdf

in the decision making process as well as to resolve conflicts. Thirdly, for the state to perform its functions it requires citizens who are willing and able to take up the perspective of the public good and civil society is taken as the main arena for promoting common consciousness. Hence, the conservatives advocate a regulatory role for the state in civil society, as the state can direct the course of civil society to promote and maintain the democratic system.

The best expression of the former view can be found in the United States policy of the promotion of the 'Third Wave' in the Third World Countries in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Civil society has been an integral factor in the promotion of democracy in the United States foreign policy. This foreign policy is apparent in its democratization process in the Third World especially during the 1980s where it funded many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to promote and strengthen democracy in both transition and developing countries. This policy is based upon the notion that "a strong civil society makes democratic practices and traditions more likely to flourish."[18] The various CSOs, particularly the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have come to play a central role in this creative and critical dialogue with the state. From 1990–2003, most US AID democracy assistance was sent to the countries in Eurasia ($5.77million) with the lowest levels of aid going to Africa ($1.29 million) and Asia ($1.29 million) to strengthen the civil society in these regions for promoting democracy.[19] In the 21st Century, the promotion of civil society in the Third World is also supported by international organizations like the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Through its enormous direct and indirect influence the World Bank more or

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[18] See for details Armine Ishkanian, *Democracy Promotion and Civil Society*, (Sage Publications Ltd., UK, 2007), p.5.

[19] Ibid.

less forces its debtors and its member countries to accept "good governance" as a key component of both developed and developing economies, thereby also assigning importance to the role of the civil society as a facilitator of both democracy and market economy.[20] The emphasis on civil society is based upon the rationale that civil society provides an arena for critical dialogue with the state which in turn encourages faster conflict resolutions. Civil society provides the citizens a platform where they can voice their opinions, ideas on critical issues affecting the interests of the citizens; this in turn produces a responsive government which is more sensitive to meeting the needs of the citizens. In addition to this, the consent of the people is a major element in democratic rule and civil society is regarded as the realm where the legitimacy of the government is tested. The optimistic assumption at work here is that injustice and domination cannot survive the scrutiny of an enlightened and civic-minded public.[21] In order to promote greater interaction between the government and the citizens an informed citizenry is an essential pre requisite factor and civil society provides the main platform for civic education. Alexis de Tocqueville contended that civil society serves as the "free schools of democracy" where individuals are transformed into citizens as they exercise their rights within and accept their responsibilities to the group. [22] The relation between civil society and the state is hence, seen as a crucial factor in promoting and strengthening democratic regimes as it derives its legitimacy from the consent of the people which

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[20] See for details See for details Armine Ishkanian, *Democracy Promotion and Civil Society*, (Sage Publications Ltd.,UK, 2007), p.2.

[21] See Simone Chambers and Jeffrey Kopstein, Note 15, p.4.

[22] See Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted by Kumi Naidoo and Rajesh Tandon, "The Promise of Civil Society, CIVICUS, ed., *Civil Society at the Millennium*, (Replika Press Pvt. Ltd., India, 1st Edition, 2005), p. 12.

requires more citizen participation and input into policy decisions and civil society provides the sphere where this can be achieved.

In contrast, to the above line of thought, throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, there arose a need to protect and preserve an autonomous space for civil society, from the potentially oppressive power of the state. Moreover, the increasing disillusion with the state followed by the French Revolution eventually led to theoretical re evaluations of the state resulting in a very sharp critique of the nature of the state as being potentially totalitarian. Within this background, Thomas Paine developed a theory which presented the state as anti pole of civil society. Thomas Paine in his political essay *Common Sense* called for a separation between civil society and the state, terms that many writers had considered interchangeable. Thomas Paine advocated for minimum intervention and stressed that both the individual citizens and the people as a collective unit would benefit immensely from a state which keeps its influence over civil society to a minimum.[23] Alexis de Tocqueville also stressed the importance of an independent civil society. Alexis de Tocqueville envisages civil society as the 'third sphere' of society the state belongs to the first sphere, economy comes second and the civil society comprises the 'third sphere' wherein parties, churches, literary and scientific societies, professional groups etc. have considerable amount of 'force' and 'energy.' And that it is through these groups and associations that the excesses of the authoritarian state can be limited or contained.[24] Civil society as an autonomous sphere is further elaborated by Antonio Gramsci. Unlike Karl Marx who viewed civil society as representing the interests of the

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[23] See Thomas Paine as quoted by Henrik Berglund,Note 19, p.4.

[24] See Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted by K.M. Seethi, *Civil Society- State Discourses: From Liberalism and Marxism to Neo- Marxism and Neo- Liberalism*, School of International Relations and Politics, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerela, 2007, p. 2

bourgeoisie class, Antonio Gramsci viewed civil society is an autonomous realm for gaining leadership potentialities for the working class. Antonio Gramsci claimed that civil society represented an arena which could be used by the working class to slowly create its own hegemony of interests, cultural orientations, and ideological outlooks to mark the prelude to its own domination of the state and the eventual absorption of the state into a civil society dominated by working class interests.[25] Civil society is hence seen as the arena separate from the state where ideological struggles takes place between the ruling class and the ruled class to turn the ruled class into ruling class.

The civil movements that swept over Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s had led to a profound interest in the concept of civil society amongst the New Left who view civil society a key role in defending the people against the state and market and in formulating democratic will to influence the state. The civil society movements showcased that a 'third sphere' can be carved out in the public sphere, distinct from the state and the market. Furthermore this 'third sphere' can act as a check on state despotism by mobilizing the people through common goals and objectives. The main rationale behind assigning a separate real for civil society fundamentally rest upon the assumption that civil society plays a key role in defending people against the state and market and in formulating democratic will to influence the state. These Central and Eastern European and Latin American countries were characterized by "a conflictual political process completely insulated from claims made by independent social groups and which emphasized on party state's predominance over social processes by refusing to

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[25] See Antonio Gramsci as quoted by Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield, *Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes, Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 1. Oct., 1992, p.5

allow for independent social activity."[26] This form of repression along with an unresponsive political system and the inability to influence policy in the public sphere further strengthen the need to carve out a separate arena within the public sphere. The failure of these regimes to address the interests of the citizens' hence accelerated the process of the emergence of civil society in these regions. The emphasis placed upon the state as the sole superstructure within the public sphere primarily led to the failure to consolidate society's increasing complex set of interests. For the citizens of these regimes, the only alternative was thus to establish a realm within the public sphere which would have the ability to counter the oppressive state who had no moral or legal right to oppose the people to carry out independent collective action to pursue common interests.

An analysis of the above two perspectives regarding civil society and the state, fundamentally reveals that while democratic regimes adhere to the first view, which is, to employ civil society to strengthen the democratic system the latter view, which imply that civil society should emerge as an autonomous sphere separate from the state is prevalent in most non- democratic systems. Civil society appeals to the democratic regimes on account of its ability to elevate the citizens above their narrow self interests and to actively work towards the collective interests. Civil society per se promotes active citizen participation and pursuance of the common good as against apathy and self absorbed individualism, the enemy of democracy. While the New Left fascination with civil society rest upon its ability to provide an alternative force, a force characterised by the power of the people, to stand against the oppressive state. The belief of the New Left

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[26] See Antonio Gramsci as quoted by Marcia A. Weigle and Jim Butterfield, *Civil Society in Reforming Communist Regimes, Comparative Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 1. Oct., 1992, p.3

echoes the belief of the Liberals that the consent of the majority is crucial to maintaining any political system. However, the New Left varies from the Liberals in their contention that since the state fears the power of the people, it will constantly try to suppress any form of associational life which might posed as a threat to the authority and power of the state as the emergence of civil society is eventually viewed as a threat to the state. But whatever maybe the belief, whether if state promotes or hinders the growth of civil society, the fact remains that civil society can contribute to peace, stability and justice, just as it can foment conflict, instability and exclusion.[27]

3.2. **Vibrant Civil Society**

The concept of a vibrant civil society emerged amongst the intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe with the anti totalitarian struggles during the 1980s. The concept regained importance in the West with the realisation that, "we (in the West) have been living it without noticing' as 'part of the unremarked fabric of society itself."[28] However, conceptions regarding the degree of vibrancy of a civil society differs, for instance, while some view membership to voluntary organizations, expenditures in the voluntary sector, participations in demonstrations, boycotts and petitions, and informal social networks as basis for measurement and the higher a country scores according to these measures the more vibrant it is. [29] There are others who view the existence of an independent social realm as the basis for measurement. In the absence of a universal definition of what a vibrant civil society should or ought to be, the radical model which emerged during the

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[27]See for details See for details See for details Armine Ishkanian, *Democracy Promotion and Civil Society*, (Sage Publications Ltd.,UK, 2007), p.24
[28]See David Lewis, *Civil Society in Non-Western Context: Reflections on the 'usefulness' of a Concept,* 2001, p. 7, http://www. eprints.lse.ac.uk/29052/1/CSWP13_web.pdf
[29]See for details Alexander Borodin, *How the Presence of a Vibrant Civil Society Triggers Democratization*, Essex student research online, Vol 5 (2), 2013, p.2, https://www.essex.ac.uk/journals/estro/documents.

1980s is taken as the ideal type, whereby, the criteria for measurement of a vibrant civil society is to consist of two factors externally, it should exist as an independent sphere and internally, it should generate greater citizen participation.

The Solidarity Movement in Poland (1980- 81) can be perhaps regarded as the event which introduced the concept of a vibrant civil society into contemporary political thought. This movement was a broad anti-bureaucratic social movement, using the methods of civil resistance to advance the causes of workers' rights and social change. 'Solidarity' reached 9.5 million members by 1981 which constituted of 1/3rd of the total working age population of Poland. The revolution which began in 1980 finally ended in June 1989 with the formation of the first non-Communist government in the Soviet bloc. This significance of this movement lies in the following reasons; firstly, this movement witnessed the emergence of an autonomous social participation under a state directed society, thereby, subsequently demonstrating that civil society can emerge as an autonomous arena within the public sphere. Secondly, it undermined the liberal contention that an active civil society is principal to democratic systems and can emerge only under democratic regimes and not under communist regimes. Thirdly, it witnessed the emergence of a new radical model of civil society which directly challenged the liberal model of civil society.

The Solidarity Movement in Poland generated renewed interests in the concept of civil society as it provided a possibility to either reconstruct the liberal model of civil society or to carve out an ideal type of civil society based on this new radical model. This radical model served as the proto type of how a vibrant civil society should be, it was unlike the already exiting liberal model, it was more vigorous in the pursuit of the

common good and had already showcased to the world that it could be practically implemented. It subsequently showed that civil society could be used as an arena in the democratic struggle, and that a space open for voices not controlled by the state was vital for any serious resistance.[30] Moreover, unlike the liberal model which viewed civil society as merely a support structure to democracy, this new radical model showed that an independent civil society even possesses the capacity to overthrow an authoritarian regime. The possibility of organising the citizens as counterweight to the state gained attention amongst the radical left and the liberals alike; while the radical left were drawn to the revolutionary aspect of civil society, the liberals were left with the dilemma of how to direct this new radical model within democratic lines which would help in maintaining the democratic state rather than dispose of it.

The radical left fascination with civil society led to renewed interest in Gramsci's concept of civil society. While Marx viewed civil society as merely an institution aimed at furthering the bourgeoisie interests in the society, Gramsci presented a whole new side to this Marxist interpretation. Gramsci claimed civil society to be the prime arena for social political struggle, while he retained the Marxist interpretation that civil society consist of conflicts between two conflicting interests- between the ruling class and the ruled, yet the similarity ends there. Distinct from the Marxist interpretation that civil society is aimed at the bourgeoisie interest, Antonio Gramsci on the contrary viewed civil society as the arena where the ruled can directly contest with the ideology of the ruling class and carve a niche for themselves within the public sphere, thereby, implying that

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[30] See for details Aleksander Smolar, *From Opposition to Atomization, Journal of Democracy*, Journal of Democracy, Volume 7,Number 1, January 1996,https://muse.jhu.edu.

civil society contained a wide range of organisations which both challenged and upheld the existing order. This elucidation was picked up by the radical left who began to view civil society as an ideology which can be realised even under non- democratic regimes. The radical left first experience with civil society was in the form of a vibrant civil society; hence, their whole conception of what civil society should be differed from the liberals. They envisaged a more independent civil society which could challenge the authority of the despotic state.

Alternately, the liberals were divided on account on the emergence of this new radical model, while some view it as a threat to the liberal conception of civil society some saw it as an opportunity to revive the liberal model. The possibility of reviving the liberal model of civil society based on a vibrant civil society gained momentum amongst many intellectuals in the West where the concept had begun to grow stagnant due to the liberal pre occupation with the market and the state. A return to the concept of civil society became crucial at this point as it posed a threat to the statist features of liberal democratic politics; therefore, an alternative model aimed at taming the radical model but still retaining some of the main characteristics of a vibrant civil society was pursued by the liberals.

The revivification of civil society requires a complete assessment of the new radical model not only in Poland but also in other parts of Eastern and Central Europe and Latin America. An analysis of the new radical model is crucial in order to understand the theoretical framework of the ideal type of civil society. New terms like 'action civil society, ''civil society first' and 'self management' began to dominate the search for this new model of civil society which aimed at tracing democracy within civil society. The

Polish theorists came up with the idea of a 'self limiting revolution,' an evolutionist strategy prior to the 1980s which aspire for peaceful transformation of society towards 'self organisation,' an autonomous organization, distinct from the state.[31] The 'self limiting revolution' which formed the theoretical basis for the civil society movement in Poland is the result of three main Polish thinkers Leszek Kolakowski, Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron who sought to develop new approaches in the wake of the unsuccessful trade union movements in Poland in 1970-71 and in 1976. Leszek Kolakowski called for the reconstruction of the social sphere through resistance and asserted that pressure should come from below and it should be aimed at creating an autonomous societal sphere, rather than overthrowing of the state power. Jacek Kuron also stated the need for an evolutionary process of change, for 'self limitation' by the organised forces of pressure from below.

"A system for society to function must be worked out It is a matter of a system in which the social structure can be established from below, from the populace, which is increasingly well organised (and) which demands more pluralism, more democracy."[32]

What the Polish model sought to create was a radically new approach to the theory and practice of democracy centred on civil society the 'civil society first' strategy. This 'civil society first' strategy calls for a radical self management agenda; the Polish theorists did not seek the dissolution of the state as they consider it as unlikely to wither away, subsequently, they sought an autonomous societal sphere for 'societal self defence' as against the state. Michnik further elaborated on this 'civil society first' strategy by

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[31]See Gideon Baker, *Civil Society and Democracy: Alternative Voices*, (Routledge Publishing, London, 1st Edition, 2002), p. 14.
[32] See for details Jacek Kuron as quoted by Gideon Baker, Note 33, p. 19.

stating that, "What sets today's opposition apart is the belief that a program for evolution ought to be addressed to an independent public, not to totalitarian power. Such a programme should give directives to the people on how to behave, not to the powers on how to reform themselves. Nothing instructs the authorities better than pressure from below."[33]

What the Polish thinkers envisage was an autonomous societal sphere where the social organisations would be left to their own devices without any interference of the state. The notion of 'self management' was to be extended not only to the trade unions but also in education, culture and mass media as well; where all these aspects of the society would be controlled by the social organizations through democratically elected national and state councils. Although, the Polish thinkers stressed upon the idea of creating autonomous societal organisations, separate from the state, yet, they did not advocate for the dissolution of the state as the state was "recognised as necessary in preventing anarchy and to provide minimalist administration functions."[34]

The Czechoslovakian civil society model was alternately fashioned around the Declaration of Charter 77, signed on January 1977 and viewed as a citizen initiative. The Charter starts with the words, "a free, informal, open community of people … united by the will to strive, individually and collectively, for the respect of civic and human rights in our own country and throughout the world."[35]

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[33] See for details See Gideon Baker, *Civil Society and Democracy: Alternative Voices*, (Routledge Publishing, London, 1st Edition, 2002), p. 17.

[34] See Gideon B. Baker, *Civil Society and Democratization Theory: An Inter- regional Comparison*, University of Leeds, 1998, p. 26, http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/497/1/uk_bl_ethos_391245.pdf. Accessed on 9th June, 2014.

[35] See for details http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/docs/declaration_of_charter_77.pdf

Echoing the Polish concern that a sustainable evolutionary strategy in which gradual pressure from below is preferred to direct confrontation, Cerny, described the Charter as a pressure group and not a resistance movement. Similar to the Polish thinkers the Chartists stressed on the importance of non violence and repudiated the notion of assuming of state power. For the Chartists, the assumption of state power was not on the agenda as their main emphasis was on the growth of non state associational life. What the Chartists sought was an autonomous civil society which can serve as a watchdog for abuses of state power. Consequently, they adopted an anti statism approach leading to rejection of not only state power but also power of any kind; however, this approach flows from an emphasis upon self management rather then on aversion to the state system. Self management for the Chartists implies the democratic organization of the society, where self managing bodies would rise from below. The Chartists had a notion of civil society as constituting a sphere that was at once public and private public in the sense of its status as an arena wherein collective interests could be expressed and open debate facilitated, private in its articulation of a non state (though not a liberal-individualist or market) sphere by which 'politics' could be strictly delimited.[36]

The Hungarian model of civil society initially endorsed the Polish idea of 'self limitation' however after 1987 the Hungarian thinkers sought to modify the Polish model to fit the Hungarian circumstances. These Hungarian thinkers merged the Polish model of democracy with the 'Social Contract,' which unlike the Polish model was centred on political action and was more economy centered and elite focused. The Hungarian theorists believed that transformation could take place only through changing the character of the

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[36] See Gideon B. Baker,"Civil Society and Democratization Theory: An Inter- regional Comparison," Note 34, p.48.

ruling elite; the Hungarian Philosopher George Konrad complements this view by citing the example of Southern Europe, by stating that, in Eastern Europe it is impossible to democratize society by trying to overthrow the local elite. Nor was that the way it was done in southern Europe. The political elites were not overthrown; a more broadly based middle class and technocracy simply absorbed them. A middle class intelligentsia on the road to embourgeoisment swallowed up the political bureaucracy of dictatorship. The new recipe (therefore) calls for a transformation of the political structures by means of a slowly ripening social transformation. Political changes must be preceded by social changes. Mass movements will not modify or weaken the power structure in any significant way."[37]

The Hungarian Social Contract is characterized by Michael Bernhard as a democratic forum which espoused a 'third way' between western capitalism and Soviet communism putting emphasis on local and economic autonomy and which is governed by local communities with a multiparty system and a mixed market economy.

Latin America also experienced a surge in civil society movements during the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike, the Central and Eastern Europe models of civil society whose activities were limited within the scope of their own specific countries, the Latin American models of civil society on the other hand were instead more focused on the continent wide struggle for democracy. The Latin American discourse on the idea of civil society began particularly during the 1980s particularly on account of the diminishing influence of the Marxist theory amongst the intellectuals. Prior to the 1980s, the 'Dependency Theory' dominated the Latin American intellectuals which primarily state

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[37] See Gideon B. Baker,"Civil Society and Democratization Theory: An Inter- regional Comparison,",p.59

that the idea of civil society, part of the bourgeoisie democracy was incompatible with the political systems of dependent countries. However, by the late 1970s, the Latin American intellectuals underwent a change in their ideological orientations on account of the increase violence by the authoritarian regimes in the region. The democratic transitions in Southern Europe during the 1970s further drew the Latin American intellectuals to the possibility of a bloodless revolution. Following these revelations, the Left began to take a renewed interest in Gramsci's conception of civil society, which presented civil society as a separate political sphere. The two main civil society movements in Latin American were the Zapatistas in Mexico and the Civil Society Assembly (*Asambla de la Sociedad Civil)* in Guatemala. Similar to the Central and Eastern European models, the Latin American models also demanded a separate sphere for civil society, from the state was well as from the political parties. This anti political stance emerged from the fear that the political parties might manipulate or take advantage of the strength of the civil society movements. These civil society movements were also characterised by "a significant degree of internal democracy, including participation by the grass roots, open meetings, collectivization and rotation of leadership, and absolute administrative transparency."[38] What the civil society movements in Latin America sought for was autonomy from the state, even to the point of anarchism and internal democracy which would help in coordinating the multitude of interests represented by the different grass root organisations within the society.

Based upon the above analysis, the reasons that led to the emergence of a robust vibrant civil society in the above two regions was the presence of unresponsive and

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[38] See for details See Gideon Baker, *Civil Society and Democracy: Alternative Voices*, (Routledge Publishing, London, 1st Edition, 2002), p.78.

oppressive political systems which failed to represent the interests of the citizens and in turn alienated them from the decision making process. Under authoritarian regimes, the emergence of civil society is generally attributed to oppressive state regimes which had failed at interest representation by firstly, ignoring the interests of the citizens and secondly by limiting any scope of associational life through state controlled society. And it is very often that due to this failure, the society as a form of self defence begins to carve out an autonomous sphere for itself to meet the oppressive state by forming groups and associations to further their own interests. Signs of defensive civil society appeared in the Soviet Union much as they had in Central Europe, through dissent and attempts to defend moral and legal autonomy against the onslaught of state penetration into all forms of social life.[39] When the state fails to recognise these signs of societal self defence, it often leads to the destruction of the political system as is the case of Poland.

Even though the radical model failed to produce a lasting impact in the countries where it emerged and continued to decline after 1989 as most of the radical theorists abandoned their radical, third way, political beliefs as most of them shifted from radicalism to main stream liberalism. In 1991, Michnik wrote, "liberal values in the era of post communism, values codified in the writings of John Stuart Mill and Alexis de Tocqueville, and also those of Hayek, are meeting with their true renaissance."[40] However, the contribution of the radical model cannot be denied as it laid down the groundwork for the theoretical framework upon which the liberal model could seek inspiration from and could reform itself. With the common defining features of greater societal autonomy, active citizen participation and peaceful movements, the radical model infused new vigour to the concept of civil

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[39] See for details See for details See for details See for details Armine Ishkanian, *Democracy Promotion and Civil Society*, (Sage Publications Ltd.,UK, 2007), p.8.
[40] Gideon B. Baker, Note 36, p.65.

society by asserting the potentiality of civil society in transforming the society. What the radical model of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America proposed was to provide an alternative to the statist political philosophy based on the principles of self limitation and self organisation. That a sovereign state with an all encompassing power over all forms of social, political and economic life suffocates the self-determining actions of the citizens. These radical theorists thus intended to come up with a vibrant civil society concept which would not only try to prevail over the oppressive state but would also try to usher in a peaceful evolutionary movement as against the tools of violence employed by the oppressive state. Even though, the radical model emerged within authoritarian political context, the essence of the democratic theory is 'consent of the people' and the radical model has the capacity to contribute more to this then the liberal model. Civil society is thus alternately viewed not merely as a tool supporting the statist liberal democracy but rather as a democratic end in itself and this is what distinguishes a vibrant civil society from a listless one.

3.3. **Citizen's Participation in Civil Society**

Contemporary scholarly literature and to a certain extent political communication as well privileges a definition inspired by Jürgen Habermas or Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, whereby civil society is the space where questions of public interest are discussed by individuals or groups organised on a voluntary basis; often, civil society is considered to equate to NGOs or non-state actors.[41] Civil society is alternately presented as an arena where the citizens and their formal and informal associations participate in the public sphere to represent their composite interests, to seek consensus on those interests and to pursue the common good through collective action. Civil society is accordingly regarded

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[41] See for details David Armstrong, Valeria Bello, Julie Gilson and Debora Spini, Note 14, p. 16.

as an arena marked by the pursuit of the common good by the multi voluntary groups and associations consisting of nongovernmental organizations, welfare communities, trade unions, church organizations, cooperatives, online groups, women's associations etc. John Locke, Friedrich Hegel and Alexis De Tocqueville also loosely incorporated all types of citizens' groups in the basket of civil society.[42]

If to go by with this understanding of the West in regard to the composition of civil society, then will all forms of associational groups or organisations be included within the sphere of civil society? Will it be possible to differentiate the associations or organisations which can or cannot qualify as civil society organisations (CSOs)? In order to analyze these questions it is pertinent that the concept of public sphere should be firstly explained. Jürgen Habermas in his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) has explained elaborately on the concept of the public sphere. According to Jürgen Habermas, "the public sphere is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, this arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it is a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical to the state, it is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling."[43]

This explanation helps in permitting a distinction amongst the state, market and the democratic associations; a crucial step in order to determine the criteria for distinguishing CSOs from the other organizations in the society. Phillippe C. Schmitter has laid down four criteria for identification of CSOs, "its dual autonomy from both the

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[42] See Krishna Hachhethu, *Civil Society and Political Participation,* p. 2, http.www.democracy-asia.org/./krishna/ Civil%20Society%20and%20Polotical%20Participation.pdf.

[43] See for details Jürgen Habermas as quoted by Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," Carolyn M. Elliot, ed., Note 6, pp. 84-85.

state and primary social units of production and reproduction; its capacity for collective action in defense of the interests and passions of its members; its self-limitation with regard to governing the polity as a whole; and its willingness to act in a civil fashion."[44]

The European Union (EU) considers CSOs to include: "all non-State, not for profit structures, non-partisan and non violent, through which people organize to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic they include membership based, cause-based and service oriented CSOs.[45]

In addition to this, the CSOs are often characterised by tolerance, non violent methods in the form of protests and demonstrations, commitment to the pursuit of the common good and open membership. CSOs does not include all organisations that comprises of a society's associational life rather they are marked by civic norms and values which are central to the creation of a democratic society.

With these distinguishing features of CSOs, the next issue at hand is why people participate in CSOs? Citizen participation is a process which provides private individuals an opportunity to influence public decisions. Participation maybe coerced or voluntary, 'coercion' here implies, in the words of Theodore J. Lowi 'forced compliance' with government rules and regulations. One example of this option within the political context is the imposition of small civil fines for failure to vote used in many democratic countries (not the United States) to 'coerce' electoral participation.[46] Participation in the context of civil society has been generally traced to the concept of volunteering. Volunteering is

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[44] See Phillippe C. Schmitter as quoted by Khrishna Hachhethu, "Civil Society and Political Participation." Note 42, p.2.

[45] See for details European Union as quoted by World Economic Forum, *The Future Role of Civil Society,* 2012, p.8, www3.weforum.org/.../WEF_FutureRoleCivilSociety.

[46] See for details Michael E. Milakovich, *The Internet and Increased Citizen Participation in Government*, A Journal of Democracy, JeDEM 2(1): 01-09, 2010, p.2, http://www.jedem.org

primarily defined as an act committed in free choice, a decision taken in response to one's own personal values and belief system. The act of volunteering can be traced back to ancient traditions where people have taken as a norm the imperative of sharing their skills, time, ideas and energy with their neighbours. This was done in a spirit of reciprocity, something for you, and something for me.[47] Volunteering exists in almost all societies, in most cultures it exists in the form of volunteer projects undertaken by the community like the use of common property such as forests, waterways, common festivities etc. It is this volunteering effort which lies at the core of social action in civil society and which helps in increasing solidarity amongst its members. Volunteer effort is generally drawn up in communities as a strong tool to reinforce the belief that it is only through true citizen participation that a better world or a better society can be built. The inherent belief that the individual can change the course or transform the society constitutes the central element in building a strong civil society. And it is this belief which prompts the citizens to volunteer in civil society.

An important rationale behind citizen participation or why citizens volunteer rests upon the concept of 'citizen alienation.' A term widely popularised by Karl Marx's 'theory of class struggle,' where discontent workers mobilised themselves to overthrow the ruling class owing due to alienation over the control of the means of production. Karl Marx's 'citizen alienation' has helped in forming a basis for explaining citizen participation particularly in communist regimes. However, in modern times particularly within the democratic context the term citizen alienation has come to denote not only alienation from the control over the means of production but has also extended to the

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[47] See Margaret Bell, "Volunteering: Underpining Social Action in Civil Society for the New Millennium,"CIVICUS, ed., Note 24, p. 28.

social and political sphere where it denotes the prevention of full and free expression of opinions and unfettered participation in community life. Alienation generally arises on account of an unresponsive and oppressive government which tends to isolate the citizens from the decision making process. Sherry R. Arnstein for instance, refers to citizen participation as "a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future."[48]

The underlying basis of citizen participation thus stems from alienation from the political and economic processes along with the positive affirmation that self-empowered citizens can transform the society. Citizen participation can be thus defined as a process in which ordinary people take part on a voluntary or obligatory basis, alone or as part of a group with the goal of influencing a decision involving significant choices that will affect their community. James V.Cunningham felt that citizen participation was defined by three essential elements:

1.ordinary people, or common amateurs that is, members of a community who have no formal source of power except for their numbers; 2) the exercise of power by these people, who lead their community to think and act as they do; 3) decisions involving significant and substantial choices related to the affairs of the community.[49]

2.The primary elements which constitute citizen participation are: firstly, participation in order to make changes and secondly, dedication to the issue. Citizen participation is thus

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[48] See for details Sherry R. Arnstein as quoted by Fred Schmidt, *Citizen Participation: An Essay on Applications of Citizen Participation to Extension Programming*, 1998, http://ag.arizona.edu/sfcs/cyfernet/nowg/cd_essay.html

[49] See for details James V. Cunningham as quoted by Pierre André, Patricia Martin and Georges Lanmafankpotin, *Citizen Participation*, http://www.dictionnaire.enap.ca.

the involvement of the private individuals in the public sphere for the pursuit of the common good. Participation is generally viewed from different perspectives based upon the pursued goals and objective. Some of these perspectives are:

1. Participation as policy: Participation here is viewed as a sound and desirable policy to be implemented. It calls for citizen participation in the decision making process of the government. It rests upon the rationale that those who would be affected by the policies or decisions should be consulted to make way for more efficient implementation of the policies and decisions. It generally touches upon the citizen's 'right to be involved' in decision making.

2. Participation as strategy: Participation here is approached as a matter of strategy; the means for utilising participation is viewed from two angles those who are working within the system and those who are working outside the system. For those within the system, such as government agencies and interest groups, participation may serve as a major technique for gaining legislative and political support and legitimation.[50] While for those who are working outside the system, citizen participation may act as the means to change the political system.

3. Participation as communication: According to this approach, participation is viewed as a means to improve information inputs into administrative decisions. Since the objective of the government is to serve people, it is pertinent that the views and preferences of people should be infused as necessary inputs to produce responsive decisions.

4. Participation as conflict resolution: Participation here is viewed as a means to reduce tensions and to resolve conflicts. The underlying assumption here is that increased

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[50] See for details Norman Wengret, *Citizen Participation: Practice in search for a Theory*, p. 4, http//www.lawlibrary.unm.edu/nrj/16/1/02_wengert_citizen.pdf

interaction between the citizens and the government decreases tensions and hostilities by promoting greater understanding and tolerance between the two parties.

The central emphasis of the different perspectives of participation basically calls upon the creation of empowered citizens. The term empowerment is generally applied in many disciplines; however, the meaning of empowerment varies from one discipline to another. In order to under the concept of citizen empowerment it is pertinent to analyse empowerment. At the core of empowerment, lies the idea of power, empowerment denotes two important assumptions, firstly that power can be changed and secondly that power can expand. The first connotation of power denotes the power of the state which is not static and therefore power relationships can be changed. The second connation deals with the notion that power can be shared, it cannot remain concentrated in the hands of a few. Empowerment therefore implies the power of the people to take control of their own lives, their own communities and their societies by taking over issues that they consider as important, thereby giving more power to the citizens to change or transform their society even at the point of acting independent from the state. The simplest example of empowered citizens implies participating in community projects, while a more complex example of empowered citizens implies the participation of citizens in social movements. The concept of Empowered citizens within the context of civil society is generally treated on the same par as informed citizens who are able to able to make informed choices, understand how their government works and have access to different sources of information regarding their rights as citizens and the responsibility of the State as a duty bearer. It also implies getting greater access and control over the resources. In democratic systems with its emphasis on 'good governance,' it requires the citizens to be more

involved and more aware in order to promote greater accountability and transparency. In the absence of this knowledge and awareness the citizens remain mostly ignorant and apathetic to the whole political system. However, the potentiality of empowered citizens in transforming the society is apparent in the case of Latin America following the emergence of the civil society movements during the 1970s and 1980s, where citizen participation was on the rise on account of the increasing discontentment with the political system. With the blockade of political parties and unions by the dictatorial regimes, the citizens organised themselves at the community level, an attempt at collective civil initiative. The social activists in this region have encouraged citizen participation by combining the fight for freedom and basic rights with concrete projects to improve quality of life. The Latin American example is an explicit demonstration of the resourcefulness and initiative pursued by ordinary citizens with the will to bring about change.

An essential part of the process of democratisation is the creation of a political culture comprising of active participants who are able to make informed choices, understand how their government works and have access to different sources of information regarding their rights as citizens and the responsibility of the State as a duty bearer.[51] Civil society is considered as the prime arena for providing civic education, as an informed citizenry is crucial in promoting constructive dialogue between the citizens and the government and in resolving conflicts. On account of this reason, the governments under democratic systems has took to financing the CSOs and has also undertaken efforts to providing an enabling environment for sustaining civil society by

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[51] See for details UNDP, *Supporting Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Citizen Participation (Project Report)*, 2006, p. 6,wwwundp.org/content/.../undp/.../projects/.../CSO%20Prodoc1-signed.pdf

providing multiple opportunities for self expression, dialogue and exchange with these CSOs as mediums between the citizens and the government. Maintaining an enabling environment is essential in promoting citizen participation. Enabling environment is taken to mean having good connections between different civil society forms, adequate resourcing, widespread acceptance of the role of civil society, sustained spaces for inclusive dialogue with governments, and laws and regulations that make civil society operations easy and straightforward.[52] Existence of an enabling environment is a pre requisite factor in sustaining the CSOs which possesses the capacity to educate and organise the public towards maintaining an effective democratic public sphere. An important feature of an enabling environment is the role of free associational life in producing empowered citizens. In order to encourage active citizen participation it is required that a rich associational life is maintained. Edward C. Banfield's in his work, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society (1958) stated that, "a rich associational life comes about only though modern intermediate institutions. It is through the multifarious ties that these institutions sponsor that public trust is generated. This is what allows modern society and the state to function the way they do."[53]

These modern intermediate institutions helps in strengthening the democratic society by enabling the citizens to voice their opinions and ideas by promoting a greater flow of communication between the rulers and the ruled thereby minimising the conflicts and tensions. According to Alexis de Tocqueville, voluntary associations serve as the "free schools of democracy" where individuals are transformed into citizens as they

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[52] See CIVICUS, *State of Civil Society 2013: Creating an enabling environment: The Synthesis Report,* http://www.civicus.org, p. 12.

[53] See for details Edward C. Banfield as quoted by Dipankar Gupta, "Civil Society or the State: What happened to Citizenship, Carolyn M. Elliot, ed., Note 6, pp. 222- 223.

exercise their rights within and accept their responsibilities to the group.[54] Alexis de Tocqueville further argued that democratic associations should be kept fit and in readiness so that the state could be curbed if and when the occasion arose.[55] The Third wave democratization process in Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America witnessed the emergence of vibrant civil societies, however, most of the countries in these regions failed to sustain it on account of the absence in providing enabling environments. Active citizen participation can emerge under situations of 'citizen alienation' but to retain it, an enabling environment coupled with free associational life is required. Citizen participation in its backbone comprises of independent, conscious and educated people who aims at bringing about transformation within their environment. In order to maintain active citizen participation it is required that certain opportunities or measures are created whereby the citizens can take part in the decision making process.

In the modern world, with the emergence of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) citizens are becoming more informed about their rights as well as the policies of their governments. Interactions between the citizens and the CSOs are growing due to increasing access to the Internet, social media and mobile phone technology, the power of the individual as a virtual citizen is on the rise. What modern technology is ushering in is a new level of citizen participation which is marked by concerned citizens who are labelled as the promoters of a new consciousness. They are the empowered citizens who are not afraid of the dictators or the violence that these dictators can and will inflict; moreover, they possess the capacity to bring down corrupt

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[54] See Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted by Kumi Naidoo and Rajesh Tandon, "The Promise of Civil Society, CIVICUS, ed., Note 24, p. 12**.**
[55] See for details Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted by Dipankar Gupta, "Civil Society or the State, Carolyn M. Elliot., ed., Note 6, p. 221.

governments without the use of arms or weapons. Citizen participation has undergone a massive change as citizens are increasingly becoming aware of their rights as well as the legitimate demands that they can make from the state. The expression 'Power to the people' is now widely implied especially by the CSOs and the governments can no longer ignore this call for a truly democratic society, as is showcased by the popular uprising in the Arab region in the 21st Century. Gone are the days of apathy and indifference to the political system, what is emerging now is the voice of the people calling for building a better world. Citizen participation is no longer limited to voting in elections; rather it has expanded to addressing multiple issues from environmental degradation to gender issues and even the overthrowing of dictatorial regimes. The traditional notion of citizen participation has been replaced by a new form of active citizen participation driven by the belief that the highly centralized institutions of power can be restored back to the ordinary citizens.

3. 4. **Mass Mobilization and Civil Society**

On 8Th February, 2011 thousands of citizens in London, Rome, Paris, Madrid and 750 other cities took to the streets to protest against the Iraq War. These protests were a sign of solidarity amongst the citizens of the world in their pursuit of noble ideals. On 4th June, 1989, in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, a protest was staged by the Chinese students and workers demanding for government accountability, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and the restoration of workers control over industry. This popular movement which came to be known as the 'Tiananmen Square protests of 1989' or more accurately 'The 1989 Democracy Movement' witnessed the first major civil society movement in China. On March 26, 1974, a group of peasant women in Reni village, Hemwalghati, in

Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, India, acted to prevent the cutting of trees and reclaim their traditional forest rights, which were threatened by the contractors assigned by the state Forest Department. This incidence led to the 'Chipko Movement' or 'Forest Satyagraha' which later became a source of inspiration to environmental protests and movements all over the world.

The above examples exhibit certain important aspects regarding civil society movements; firstly, civil society movements are distinguishable from other revolutions or political movements, as it relies on the methods of peaceful protests, direct action, events/media stunts, demonstrations, propaganda, strikes, boycotts, non-co-operation and civil disobedience as against the use of violence. Secondly, civil society represents an arena marked by plurality of interests and collective action. Thirdly, civil society movements can emerge at the international, regional, national and grass root levels and under democratic as well as communist regimes.

The terms social movements and civil society movements are used interchangeably as both these movements are generally defined as large-scale informal groupings of individuals or organisations, with shared interests who are motivated by the need to come together to focus on specific political or social issues in order to change or transform the society. Both civil society and social movements are inter- related, for instance, social movements are considered as a key element of civil society and regarded as an arena or platform to test the vibrancy of civil society within a particular political system. Social and political protest is a means by which groups or segments of a given society try to influence public discourse and political decision-making on a variety of

issues.[56] Their mere presence shows social cohesion and the integration of the rational self interests of the citizens. Social movements emerge when there is a perceived gap between the aspirations of the citizens and the failure to the governments to meet those aspirations. It is this failure which creates a common cause thereby leading to mobilization. On the other hand, civil society strengthens social movements by promoting alliances amongst the various actors within the social movements. Social movements represent the means for the realisation of the goals of civil society. And in order to generate the means for the realisation of the goals, civil society tries to generate mass mobilization.

One of the essential ingredients in social or political movements is mass mobilization. The masses comprise of the backbone of popular movements or uprisings; it is through mobilization that the society is recruited behind the cause. According to the Webster Dictionary 'to mobilize' implies "to bring (people) together for action or to come together for action."[57] Mobilization according to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is "a process that engages and motivates a wide range of partners and allies at national and local levels to raise awareness of and demand for a particular development objective through face-to-face dialogue. Members of institutions, community networks, civic and religious groups and others work in a coordinated way to reach specific groups of people for dialogue with planned messages. In other words, social mobilization seeks to facilitate change through a range of players engaged in interrelated and complementary efforts."[58]

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[56]See for details Derrick Purdue, *Civil Societies and Social Movements: Potentials and Problems*, (Routledge Publishing, Oxon, 2007), p. 124.
[57]See http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mobilize
[58] See for details http://www.unicef.org/cbsc/index_42347.html

Mobilization also implies rallying a people for a particular cause, so that they act in a prescribed manner in achieving set objectives. Mass mobilization also referred to as 'social mobilization' or 'popular mobilization' is thus generally defined as mobilizing the civilian population towards the achievement of the societal goals and objectives. Mass mobilization can be a means for changing the system by the social activists or revolutionaries to transform the system or it can be employed by the elites and the states for citizen participation in elections and voting. Mass mobilization generally takes place in the form of mass meetings, protests, processions and demonstrations showcasing social solidarity in regard to specific issues or problems of the society or as a form of demonstrating discontentment against the political system.

An important element of mass mobilization is to seek collective action which requires firstly a collective identity which would help in promoting social cohesion and solidarity. The concept of collective identity has been defined by Taylor and Whittier as, "the shared definition of a group that derives from members' common interests, experiences and solidarity."[59]

According to Alberto Melucci, it is not necessary that the masses should be in complete agreement on ideologies and beliefs in order to come together to generate collective action, as it is conflict which forms the basis for generating collective identity. Participation in movements is most often triggered by the prevalence of a particular conflict or injustice and mass mobilization takes place on the basis of addressing that conflict. And it is the presence of this conflict that binds the people together and helps in creating a collective identity which would in turn trigger collective action based upon the

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[59]See for details Taylor and Whittier as quoted by Cristina Flesher Fominaya, *Collective Identity in Social Movements: Central Concepts and Debates*, p. 2, http://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2010.00287.

shared goals and interests aimed at addressing the conflict. Conflict as the basis of collective identity helps in addressing the issue of strong collective identity at the group level which often tends to weaken collective identity at the movement level. The presence of shared affiliation to specific groups often tends to sideline the collective identity at the movement level, however, when collective identity is weaved around shared goals and interests based on addressing a specific conflict, this helps the different groups to feel like they belong to a broader movement. It is through the development of this collective identity that social cohesion and solidarity can be promoted to strengthen collective action.

Collective identity leads to collective action; collective action is defined as any action taken together by a group of people whose goal is to enhance their status and achieve a common objective. Collective action is a reflection of social cohesion and social solidarity. A study on collective action conducted by Martijn van Zomeren, Tom Postmes, and Russell Spears under Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA), states that collective action generally arises when there are perceived situations of unjust disadvantage. Many at times the disadvantaged group will compare their positions with the others which may lead to a sense of deprivation, thereby, creating a means for collective action. This is usually accompanied by the realisation that collective action can and will lead to achievement of the shared goals and objectives. However, in order to bring about collective action, a common identity is required as it helps in promoting social cohesion amongst the various members of the group. Mass mobilization is thus dependent upon two important factors collective identity and collective action. The understanding of both these two concepts in this study of mass mobilization in social

movements is centred on the presence or existence of certain conflicts or injustices in the society.

In order to further understand the role of mass mobilization, an analysis of the Resource Mobilization Theory is crucial. This theory is based on the studies of collective action which was carried out during the 1960s and which continued till the 1970s and 1980s. The theory is based on the notion that material resources, such as, money, organizations, manpower, technology, means of communication, and mass media as well as non- material resources like legitimacy, loyalty, authority, moral commitment and solidarity are critical to the success of social movements. The main assumption of this theory is the utilisation of the prevalent resources to mobilize the people towards the achievement of the goals or objectives of the movements. This theory focuses on how the actors develop strategies and interact with their environment in order to pursue their interests. The efficiency of social movements is thus dependent upon factors like the availability of applicable resources, and of the ability of the actors to use them effectively. Mobilization is understood as a process through which a group assembles resources and places them under collective control for the explicit purpose of pursuing the group's interests through collective action.[60] Resource mobilization theorists consider the following categories of resources to significantly affect the character and success of social movements: Instrumental resources: It refers to those resources that are used in the attempts to influence and motivate participants. Examples, means of communication, mass media.

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[60] See Eduardo Canel, *New Social Movement Theory and Resource Mobilization Theory: The Need for Integration,* www.inp.uw.edu.pl/.../New_Social_Movement_Theory_and_Resource_ Mobilization_Theory.docx.

Infra resources*:* It refers to the resources that condition and influences the use of instrumental resources, examples, money and manpower.

Power resources: It refers to those resources that provide the means for controlling targets, examples, authority and organisation.

Mobilizing resources: It refers to the resources that facilitate the mobilization of power resources, examples, legitimacy and moral commitment.[61]

Generation of mass support thus, does not happen overnight; rather it is the result of a gradual intense process requiring time, effort, money and strategic planning by the social activists or revolutionaries. Developing a concrete strategy is the first important step in mobilizing the masses; generally, the development of strategies involves the formation of organisations or associations, often in a hierarchical structure comprising of cadres whose main task is to help in organising the masses particularly at the local levels. The second step involves spreading of the propaganda or information of the issue at hand or the problem, which is basically done through civic education carried out by the cadres of the organisation or the associations. One of the primary elements of mass mobilization is 'organising' which is defined as the process through which "the people come to deeply understand a movement's goals and empower themselves to continued action on behalf of those goals."[62] Since the social activists or the revolutionaries operate at the grass-root levels, they are more aware of the pressing problems and issues of the common man. On account of this they are able to identify the pressing issues and efficiently mobilize the masses towards seeking concrete solutions to those issues or problems.

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[61]See Simone I. Flynn, *Resource Mobilization Theory*, http://www. wiki.zirve.edu.tr/groups/.../wiki/0edb9/.../8e38e/Flynn%202.pdf
[62]See for details http:// www.worldanimal.net/.../4_Movements_for_Social_Change.pdf

One important element of mass mobilization is maintaining effective communication with and among members of the public. With the advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), communication is now faster and information is more easily accessible to the common man. This in turn has produced a profound impact upon the mass mobilization techniques in the 21st century. The propagandas or messages of the social activists are more efficiently communicated to the masses, thereby, leading to greater facilitation of public opinion. The means of mass mobilization in terms of civic education has become more efficient on account of the new ICTs, since, the first step towards mobilization requires knowledge of the issue or the problem the social activists are able to efficiently provide the relevant information or facts to the people through the internet as well as the multi social networking sites in order to get the people interested in the issue and problem. In Toronto, a local citizens group brought together two thousand people once a week for three months in order to fight for local democracy. The group used the Internet to publish the 'real' news in the face of the media bias. The citizens worked together online and in the community to mobilize and prepare more than eight hundred people to present at government hearings and vote in a referendum. In Indonesia, student activists used Internet cafes and anonymous e-mail addresses to share information as well to coordinate the pro democracy rallies. Communication in terms of mass mobilization depends on three factors passing on information to the masses in regard to the issue at hand, coordinating the activities of the social activists and finally acting as a link between the social activists and the public. The power of ICTs as a means of passing information to heterogeneous audiences makes it a veritable tool in mass mobilization. The central factor in passing on information for mobilizing the masses depends on firstly,

what the public should and ought to know, the social activists are the primary agents in controlling the information which is to passed on to the public. If the public is already aware about the issue or problem, then the task lies in choosing a target group those who are directly affected by the issue. The main task lies in creating awareness along with the message that the problem or issue can be solved through collective action. Mass mobilization consists of a strenuous process involving considerable amount of time and effort and the social activists need to be constantly in touch as the process involves a complex network of communication system. For the social activists communication involves a three way process communication with the higher levels of the organisation or association, communication amongst the field activists and communication with the masses. ICTs help in promoting greater interaction between the activists as well as the masses by passing on relevant information or messages quickly and with greater efficiency.

In addition to this ICTs also facilitate greater communication between the social activists as well as with the masses by promoting online dialogue. There are four ways in which social media helps in promoting online dialogue:

Firstly, it helps in to raise as well as change public awareness. Information is passed on more quickly and more efficiently to the target audience. Events, catastrophes or disasters happening even in remote place of the world are now made easily known to people living in the other parts of the world owing due to social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Secondly, social media provides information to the target audience in an unadulterated form- the absence of media bias. The information thus received is more persuasive because it has context and word of mouth validation. Thirdly,

social media networks have immediate impact that gives it urgency and makes it personal and allows for immediate individual action. This is particularly important in spreading critical information.

Lastly, social media provides greater scope for citizen participation. Citizen participation also includes voicing of one's opinions against issues or problems in the society and social media has further increased this activity through the social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter where the citizens are given an opportunity to act, even if it to share a Facebook or Twitter post. This act generally provides the citizens to feel a level of involvement in regard to certain events. [63]

Mass mobilization in the 21st century has been given new life by social media. Communication is now faster, more efficient and more easily accessible and this has proved to be highly advantageous for the purpose of mobilizing the masses. Social media has enabled the social activists with a platform to transmit important issues or information to the public with greater speed and efficiency. It has also enable the citizens to acquire information which is easily accessible and which has induced the citizens to develop an interest in the prevailing issues around them. The mass mobilization capacity of social media has led to the emergence of a new 'Information Age' which has ushered in the growth of informed citizenry who are geared up to play an important role in the society and in the political system. Social media has provided a new platform for social activism by opening up new possibilities in communication, which is not restricted by any form of censorship; rather, it has further widened the scope of freedom of speech and expression. Social media has helped in generating new forms of social solidarity through

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[63] See for details Pamela Rutledge, *Positively Media,*
http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/positively-media/201010/four-ways-social-media-is-redefining-activism

'virtual communities' and 'online groups' which has led to the creation of webs of inter personal relationships in cyberspace.