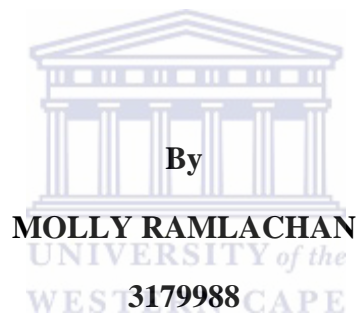




**SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING: COLLECTIVE,
PARTICIPATORY LEARNING WITHIN THE JYOTI
JIVANAM MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA**



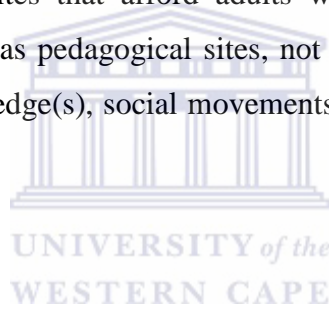
**A research project submitted to the Centre of Adult and Continuing Education,
University of the Western Cape, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Masters Degree in Education: Adult Learning and Global Change**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research paper is to explore and examine the nature of learning within the context of and situated within a social movement. Based on an exploratory qualitative study of learning within the Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa, this research explores the nature and purpose/s of learning within a social movement. Accordingly, this study is guided by the research questions: *How and why do adults learn as they collectively participate in social movements*; and what factors facilitate, contribute, hinder and influence learning within social movement? This study confirms that social movements are important sites for collective learning and knowledge construction. For this reason, social movements need to be acknowledged as pedagogical sites that afford adults worthwhile learning opportunities. Furthermore, social movements, as pedagogical sites, not only contribute to conceptions of what constitute legitimate knowledge(s), social movements also contribute to the creation of transformative knowledge(s).



Key words

- Social movement
- Social movement learning
- Adult learning
- Informal learning
- Collective learning
- Collaborative learning
- Transformative learning
- Participative learning
- activists
- Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa (JJMSA)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	1
Keywords	2

SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction	7
1.2. Background of the Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa	8
1.3. The movements activities and its social concerns	9
1.4. Rationale for the study	10
1.5. Delimitations of the research	11
1.5. Conclusion	11



SECTION TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	12
2.2. Non-formal, informal and formal learning	12
2.3. Collective learning	14
2.4. Social movement learning	16
2.4.1. Why is this important?	18
2.5. Conclusion	19

SECTION THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	20
3.2	Methods of data collection	21
3.2.1.	Data collection	21
3.3.	Data Analysis	24
3.4.	Conclusion	25

SECTION FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1.	Introduction	26
4.2.	Learning collectively through movement participation	27
4.2.1.	The learning environment- facilitating learning	27
4.3.	Learning collectively by making women's voices heard	29
4.4.	Learning collectively through dispersed educator and learner roles	30
4.5.	Learning collectively through tension and conflict	34
4.6.	Collective reflective learning	35
4.7.	Conclusion	38

SECTION FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1.	Introduction	39
5.2.	Key findings	39
5.3.	Implications for further research	40
5.4.	Concluding comments	41

References

Appendices

DECLARATION

I declare that “SOCIAL MOVEMENT LEARNING: COLLECTIVE, PARTICIPATORY LEARNING WITHIN THE JYOTI JIVANAM MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA” is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete referencing.

Full names: Molly Ramlachan Date: July 2014 Signed.....



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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

There has been an increase in the number of social movements globally from, the Zapatista movement in Chiapas, the civil rights movements and the anti-globalisation movement in the United States, the anti-austerity movement in Europe, to the HIV/AIDS movement (Treatment Action Campaign), the anti-eviction movement and anti-poaching activists in South Africa. But what is a social movement? The online *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (<http://global.britannica.com/search?query=social+movement+>) defines a social movement as a:

[...] loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal, typically either the implementation or the prevention of a change in society's structure or values. Although social movements differ in size, they are all essentially collective. That is, they result from the more or less spontaneous coming together of people whose relationships are not defined by rules and procedures but who merely share a common outlook on society.

Without contradicting the idea that a social movement, generally, is constituted through a social collective sharing and supporting a social goal, Alberto Melucci (1996) suggests that a social movement comes into existence and sustains itself through processes of negotiations and communitive action. In other words, social movements are social collectives in constant formation with members constituting themselves through an 'imagined solidarity'.

Members of a movement are consequently continuously redefining the social movements and are challenging assumptions about how issues affecting social changes ought to be conceived. While negotiating meaning/s, agitating for social change, and being involved in communitive action and praxis, social movements are clearly pedagogical sites where learning occurs. It is for these reasons that social movement theorists (Hall and Clover, 2005; Welton, 1993) have urged scholars to pay special attention to the pedagogy of activism and knowledge creation that takes place through and as a consequence of social activism and participation. Hall and Clover (2005, p. 587) are thus correct in their contention that

exploring the modalities of pedagogy of activism “is of critical use for strengthening and extending the power and reach of social movements”.

Following Hall and Clover (2005), I take up the challenge of exploring the ‘pedagogy of activism’. Accordingly, this study examines the ‘pedagogy of activism’ as it is being ‘revealed’ in my selected case study of the Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa, hereafter referred to as JJMSA, which is a social movement in the greater Durban area agitating for social change and the upliftment of society.

Specifically, this study examines the nature and modalities of learning within a social movement. Thus, this study is guided by the research question: *How and why do adults learn as they collectively participate in social movements?*

Connected and as integral to the central research question, the study aims to:

- Explore the factors that contribute to and enhance learning in social movements; and
- Understand the creation of pedagogical spaces for adult learning within social movements.

1.2. Background to the JJMSA

The JJMSA is a social movement whose current active membership stands at approximately 300 including volunteers. The movement was launched in the year 2000 as a multicultural non-profit organisation and has transformed into a fully-fledged social movement.

“Jyoti Jivanam”, simply translated, means: “light is life,” and bringing hope in the face of despair. JJMSA has its headquarters in Newlands West which is in the greater Durban area and since its inception, the movement has expanded and has established sister structures in Tongaat and Chatsworth which are to the north and south of Durban, respectively. JJMSA was established to promote the philosophy of religious, cultural and political tolerance within a multi-cultural society. To this end JJMSA sets out to act as a nucleus in rendering services, guidance and assisting community members, irrespective of creed, political, cultural, or religious affiliation, which include the provision of food hampers to the needy and destitute in the various local, and national communities during the festival of Deepavali.

JJMSA provides these services and assistance with the goal of contributing to, fostering and promoting unity, peace, brotherhood and harmony in South Africa, with a special emphasis

on the local Durban and surrounding communities. Additional goals of the JJMSA are to strive to uplift the general welfare of the communities they work in; to promote the principle of community participation in order to facilitate unity of purpose and action with mutual respect; and to build capacity amongst members to reproduce and improve on the goals of the movement, by educating and creating awareness, (JJMSA Constitution, 2000)

As a strategy to reproduce the vision and mission of JJMSA, the movement established its youth forum with the following goals:

- to promote the participation of the youth in the social upliftment of society;
- to create awareness among the youth about the social concerns in the community.

I have included the youth forum to present a comprehensive description of the movement. However, the focus of this study is on the adult learning within the movement.

1.3. The movement's activities and its social concerns.

The activists within the JJMSA are primarily community members. JJMSA has a large volunteer base across class, 'race' and gender boundaries which include learners and educators from the schools in the community, senior citizens, religious organisations, nurses, members of the navy, community members and donors and sponsors.

The movement activists engage in a plethora of activities in order to achieve its desired aims. Some of which include:

- participating in monthly meetings;
- sending out of appeal letters to possible donors;
- distributing pamphlets;
- being involved in the production of publications about the organisation and its activities;
- participating in and using the social media platforms, especially *Facebook*, to create awareness and to recruit new members;

- participating in radio and television discussions which promote the movement and its goals. Activists organise and implement fund raising events, participate in and organise social gatherings;
- conducting door to door visits to conscientise the broader community about poverty alleviation, social justice and promote community participation to facilitate unity and solidarity across social classes; and
- participating in school visits with the aim of creating awareness and inculcating a culture of helping the needy amongst young people.

Furthermore, each year the JJMSA has a hamper distribution event that is conducted over a three day period. This culminates in the distribution of food hampers to the needy amidst a rather colourful celebration. An annual general meeting is held and ‘high profile’ members of the community are invited as guests to both these events. This meeting is open to all and volunteers are honoured with a certificate of participation.

1.5. Rationale for this study

I have always been passionate about learning since I firmly believe that learning plays a fundamental role in how human beings experience their worlds; how they become knowledgeable; how they accept or reject values; and how they shape their identities. In reflecting on the significant changes and developments within the JJMSA over the years, I was confronted by the question: how and why have activists within this movement learnt? Indeed, since learning can be defined as a process that results in change in behaviour, attitudes, emotions, knowledge, skills, and values; the evidence is overwhelming that the JJMSA movement contributed to the transformation of its members’ knowledge, skills, behaviour, and values. I realised that through their collective actions a great deal of learning must have occurred among the JJMSA members. It is this learning within the movement that sparked my interest and prompted my research in learning in social movements.

This investigation is an attempt to understand the nature of social movement learning and to ascertain the contribution of individual actors to learning in the movement, as well as how the activists collectively, influence learning of individual activists.

The significance of learning in social movements and its significance in the field of adult learning have not been given the credit that it so richly deserves therefore this research study

will aim at highlighting the importance and significance of learning in social movements as an important component of adult learning. As alluded to earlier, this study is interested in giving prominence to the transformative power that social movement learning holds for individuals, collectives and as an instrument for social change.

Accordingly, this study explores how movement activists have learnt through their participation in the movement as members as well as why they have learnt. I have drawn on social constructivism to describe and analyse the nature and significance of the innovative knowledge produced within JJMSA.

1.4. Delimitations of the research

The research paper is limited to ten thousand words and has to be completed within a limited time period. In light of these limitations, I have conducted an in-depth investigation into a few of the key issues in social movement learning in order to make a worthy contribution to the current literature and not open a perfunctory window on a number of areas as this will serve little purpose in the inquiry. To this end I have limited the respondents to six in order to allow for an in depth probing of the issues concerned.

1.6. Conclusion

This section introduced the research problem; it provided background information of the JJMSA which includes its location, purpose, activities and social concerns. These were done to contextualise the study. Furthermore, this section provided the rationale and purpose of the study which was followed by the identification of some constraints under which the study has been conducted.

The section that follows, examines and reviews the scholarly literature in order to construct a conceptual framework for this inquiry.

SECTION TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

From this literature review I discovered that much of the theoretical underpinning of social movement learning theory has been expanded from learning and adult learning theories. This is not surprising as many adult educators have made major contributions towards theorising social movement learning. In this section I will explore informal learning theories, collective learning theories and social movement learning theories.

2.2. Non-formal , informal and formal learning

Experiential learning theory is one of the cornerstones of adult learning theories as it is learner centred with the emphasis on life's experiences. Within the adult learning field there are often distinctions made among formal, informal and non-formal learning. However, the definitions of informal, non-formal and formal learning are not very clear in the literature. Despite this much of social movement learning is categorised as informal and non-formal.

According to Conner (1997-2013), “formal learning straddles the hierarchical structures from the schooling system that is primary school to university together with organised school-like programmes created in business for technical and professional training” (p.1). This learning that is facilitated by the formal learning programme is often a valued form of learning among elites. Informal learning, on the other hand, is unplanned, accidental learning and a lifelong process where individuals acquire attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences, educational influences and from resources in their environment. Conner, (1997-2013, p.1), further asserts that “informal learning accounts for over 75% of the learning taking place in organisations today [and] often, the most valuable learning [taking] place serendipitously, by random chance”. Concurring with this view is Livingstone (1999) who states that informal learning is:

any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of institutions providing educational programmes, courses or workshops. [...] Explicit informal learning is distinguished from everyday perceptions, general socialisation and more tacit informal learning by people's own conscious identification of the activity as significant learning. The

important criteria that distinguish explicit informal learning are the retrospective recognition of both a new significant form of knowledge, understanding or skill acquired on your own initiative and also recognition of the process of acquisition (In Cooper and Walters, 2009, p.126).

It is however evident in the literature that categorising learning as formal, non-formal and informal is not shared unanimously amongst learning theorists (Billet 2001; Eraut 2000; Smith 2001). Firstly, it would appear that there are overlapping boundaries between these different categories. Secondly, categorising learning on the basis of the site where the learning occurred signals an ideological stance rather than an analytical stance.

For Eraut, (2000), the term non-formal as opposed to informal is more preferable since such learning occurs outside the formal learning institutions like workplace which is more loosely structured. He, however, does not provide any clear definition of non-formal learning but goes on to present five features of formal learning that include a “prescribed learning framework, an organised learning event/package, a designated teacher/trainer, formal accreditation and specification of outcomes, ” (p.12). From this we can conclude that any learning that falls outside these five features will by implication be non-formal learning.

Billet (2002) challenges whether learning can be referred to as informal. He argues that learning is a significant aspect of all human activity and it would be erroneous to classify some of the learning as informal whilst others are categorised as formal (p.2). Concurring with Eraut (2000), Billet (2002) further argues that most learning takes place outside formalised educational settings and that all learning occurs within social organisations or communities that have formalised structures.

From these perspectives it is evident that the concepts are framed within the structure of learning. Learning is understood in relation to how it is structured and where it takes place and whether or not there is the presence of an instructor or facilitator. Hall and Clover (2000) argue that for social movement a greater degree of clarity and a much richer description is required as social movement learning framework include aspects of informal, non-formal and formal learning. It needs to address the socio-environmental context of learning, the social organisation of the learning opportunities, context of learning, who teaches, how does learning come about and where this learning can or does take place? (p.7). Livingstone, (1999) argues that informal learning “is usually ignored, unrecognised, or taken for granted

as simply day-to-day getting along,” (p.50). Yet within the context of social movement learning, informal and non-formal learning offers a platform to test ideas, and assumptions within larger groups and a place to develop collective knowledge. Following this, Billet’s (2002) conception of learning is that it occurs in collaboration with others and is dependent on the context and purpose of the learning. The absence of a curriculum does not mean that the activities of social movements do not afford activists opportunities to learn. Social movements provide opportunities and, to coin a phrase, “social movement affordances,” as they are goal driven and provide a rich base for learning. This makes the activists not mere recipients of directed learning but active participants in the learning process and the generation of new knowledge.

In trying to deepen our appreciation for learning beyond the classroom, there seems to be too much concern with the institutional setting rather than the processes and content. Following this, this study specifically examines how and why activists learn through their collective participation within the social movement.

There has been much criticism levelled at the distinctions that have been made between formal, informal and non-formal learning. There is enough evidence to suggest that there is informal learning within the structures of formal learning and vice versa and the boundaries seem to be far more porous than the typology suggests.

2.3. Collective learning

As this study examines collective participatory learning within social movements, how activists and groups learn while engaged in social action, I find it of particular significance to explore the theory of collective learning proposed by Deborah Kilgore (1999).

The theory of collective learning according to Kilgore, is a “process that occurs among two or more diverse people in which taken- as- shared meanings (including visions of social justice) are constructed and acted upon by the group,” (p.191). This theory emerges amidst much criticism of the dominant theories and practises of adult learning, (Finger, 1995; Welton 1995) which emphasise the displacement of social justice as an important component of adult learning. Collins (1995) argues that self-directed learning has for long been seen as the cornerstone of adult learning and is “conceptually inadequate to examine the learning process as forces for social change” (p.2).

Confirming this, Kilgore (1999: 2001) is interested in developing an alternate to individualised learning which she maintains is not adequate to explain individual and group learning in collective action. Her theory is an attempt to explain how and why learning occurs in groups while engaged in social action, which is the focus of this research. According to her, learning in social movements requires an understanding of the centrality of the group's vision of social justice that drives it. It is worth noting that sometimes these visions of social justice are not widely agreed upon. Examples of these would be reactionary movements such as the Klu Klux Klan which advocates for white supremacy and Afrikaans Weerstandbeweging which are far right separatists. Notwithstanding this, these movements do have a vision of a different society; hence the learning within these movements will be driven by an understanding of the centrality of the groups shared vision.

Kilgore, (1999:2001) focuses on the exploration of the learning community since it is the dominant shared meaning and identity of the collective that are associated with collective action as people develop solutions to problems in society. Consistent with Kilgore (1999), Doos and Wilhelmson (2001, p. 489), assert that "learning as a collective process means learning through interactive and communicative action creating synergy. It brings about shared knowledge and understanding and results in action and competence which is part of the learning cycle". Finger (1995, p. 116) adds that it is a "collective collaborative effort as there is no individual way out".

Supporting the perspective that learning is a collaborative endeavour, Gruenfeld (1993) argues that through social interaction individuals "do more than trade individually produced knowledge". They are actually involved in the social construction of mutually agreed meaning making (knowledge) since:

They also engage in active reconciliation and integration process leading to the emergence of unique, collectively produced conceptualisations including ideas, representations, solutions and arguments that no individual had to begin with to emerge (quoted in Kilgore, 2001, p. 147).

Concurring with this view is Rogers (1984, p. 69) who maintains that the educator must "turn to the facilitation of change and learning". He further emphasises that self-initiated and experiential learning need to be acknowledged as an important component of adult learning.

In emphasising the idea that through experiences adults know, Paulo Freire (1996) criticises the traditional role of the educator who is seen as the depositors of knowledge. Knowledge is rather thought to exist within and amongst the adult learners/participants themselves. Freire (1972) values the experiences of the learners and promotes collective rather than individual learning.

In response, Kilgore uses the expansion of Vygotsky's, (1978), zone of proximal development to describe the interplay among individuals in the group. Although the focus of Vygotsky is on individualised learning, it offers a good base for expansion of his theory as it emphasises social interaction and collaborative learning from more capable peers. However, although explaining how this social interaction impacts on the individual learner, it does not go beyond the level of the individual. The expansion of this theory by Wells (1996) is applicable to situations in which individuals learn collectively. Hence, Kilgore explicates the theory of collective learning by drawing on socio-cultural learning theory and Melucci's new social movement theory. She refers to the group learning of collective cognition as "logic of practise" (2002, p.147). This epistemological move offers us a lens to see the group as a unit while recognising individual contributions to the group learning process.

Kilgore (1999:2002) offers the collective learning framework as a conceptual tool to view how and why groups learn collectively while engaged in social action. It also serves to address the limitations of individualised learning theories.

2.4. Social movement learning

There are different ideas that serve as a theoretical framework in understanding learning in social movements. Learning in social movements result from collective identity, collective action, negotiation and challenging the dominant systems through social action. These result in meaning making and unlearning dominant discourses which eventually results in emancipatory learning (Tarrow, 2011). Hence, through these processes social movement learning results in knowledge creation and construction.

This process of knowledge creation and construction is articulated by Eyerman and Jamison (1991) who have made a significant contribution in the theorising of learning within social movements. They conceptualise learning within a social movement as if the movement 'thinks' as a collective. It is for this reason that they refer to their methodology of understanding learning within the social movement as a cognitive approach which they refer

to as a “cognitive praxis” which is the “process of articulating movement identity” and putting into practise the collective vision or ideals of the movement (p. 4). “Cognitive praxis” comes through the creation, and articulation of a plethora of new thoughts and ideas which results in the construction of new knowledge through which social movements define themselves. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) also suggest that “it is through tensions between different groups and organisations over defining and acting in that conceptual space that the (temporary) identity of social movements is formed” (p. 22). The actors who are part of the social movement are referred to as the movement intellectuals and the context of articulation is cultures, politics and institutions. Among the supporters of this creative and central role of the learning process of “cognitive praxis” are Holford (1995); Foley (1999); Leung (1991) and Walters (2005).

Supporting the foundational thesis of Eyerman and Jamison (1991) regarding cognitive praxis, Walters (2005,) adds that the social, political, and cultural contexts significantly influence what is learnt within the movement by arguing that “the cultural, gender, class, and ethnic locations of the individuals or groups involved, shape the educational and organizational practices, just as they are shaped by the particular historical conjuncture”(p. 55). Consistent with Walters (2005), Leung (1991) makes a further contribution to the theoretical orientation of “cognitive praxis” by examining social movements within their historical and cultural contexts and found that it is an important consideration in understanding social movement learning.

Whatever that context may be, the literature emphasises that movement members learn due to their participation in movement activities. In accordance with this perspective Hall and Clover (2005)) add that both movement activists and those outside of the movement learn. Accordingly they refer to social movement learning as “learning by persons who are within or part of any social movement; and learning by persons who are on the outside of a social movement. They learn as a consequence of the actions taken or simply by the existence of the social movements” (p.1).

The existence of social movements and their sites are viewed as places where adult learning occurs naturally because transformative education begin when problematising of social inequity has been identified by the activists themselves. The development of the organic intellectual, (Gramsci, 1971) within social movements to build knowledge base for

reconstruction of society, is quintessential to transformative learning. For Welton, (1993) new social movements are sites of transformative learning and emancipatory praxis. We are therefore not surprised when Welton (1993) questions whether there is something of great significance for the field of education occurring within these sites. However, he has been criticised for not responding adequately to the question of what adults learn in social movements - a question that has been answered in part by other researchers regarding citizenship learning (Hall and Clover, 2005, p.587).

Hence these new conceptualisations bring the notion of power to the fore and Melucci (1988) who makes a worthy contribution to theorising learning in social movements advances the notion of power and how social movements make it visible when they challenge systems and symbols of everyday life. Melucci (1988, p. 249) contends that social movements, “translate their action into symbolic challenges that upset the dominant cultural codes” and have the power to change notions on how knowledge in relation to power is understood. This theoretical concept is expounded by Walter (2007) in his research on the Clayoquat Sound Rainforest and the subsequent victory of the environmental movement when policy changes were implemented. Clearly the actions of the activists upset the dominant cultural code and power relations were challenged.

This literature review has made it abundantly clear to me that social movements can be powerful sites of learning in general and adult learning in particular, so much so that Finger (2001) asserts that social movements have “a more powerful impact on society than does all of the learning that takes place in schools.” (Quoted in Hall and Turray, 2006, p. 8).

This review of the scholarly literature highlights the nature of learning; the theories that underpin the learning; and in particular social movement learning as expounded by the different theorists. However, there are limitations in terms of the nature and processes that facilitate this learning. Consequently this research aims to contribute to addressing these limitations.

2.4.1. Why is this important?

Social movements are conceptualised by the academy as non-formal sites of learning and accordingly the knowledge produced/constructed as a result of the social interactions within these movements remain un-codified and/or acknowledged within the academy. It is

generally assumed, within the academy, that knowledge can only be codified or privileged if and when the knowledge has been subjected to the ‘scientific process’, which Michelson (2006) refers to as “Enlightenment epistemology”. However, since social movement knowledge, following the rules of Enlightenment epistemology, has not been validated by a “reliable knower” and/or is not being “abstracted” from its situated location, social movement knowledge is frequently subjugated by the academy. Michelson (2006, p. 155) challenges this short-sightedness by making the point that “all knowledge, including academic knowledge is partial” and that different epistemologies have its unique “modalities of knowledge”.

Social movements are sites of learning and knowledge construction as the scholarly literature confirms. I suggest that social movements draw on multiple epistemologies including Enlightenment epistemology. Our task as researcher is to theorise the nature and processes of the learning and knowledge construction within social movements and so contribute to the transformation of the conceptions of knowledge/s.

2.5. Conclusion

In this section I have explored the different theories that provide a conceptual framework to the research topic on how and why activists learn collectively through participation in social movements. The literature review focuses on informal, non-formal and formal learning, collective learning and social movement learning.

The following section discusses the methodology and design of the research that has been selected for the study.

SECTION THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This section discusses the methodology that has been selected for the study. The following strategy for investigation has been envisaged: It will take the form of a single case study of the Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa in order to reveal important features about its nature. A case study will be particularly useful in trying to understand social movement learning “in depth, in detail and holistically” (Patton, 1990, p.19) since, in a case study, a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question.

The study population will consist of only the adult members of the Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa (JJMSA) although the organisation does have a youth forum as well.

This inquiry adopted the qualitative approach because the study examines an aspect involving social and cultural phenomena (Myers, 2002, p. 2). Moreover, adopting a qualitative methodology, in this instance is appropriate, since as Bryman (2008, p. 26) asserts that if we “are interested in the world views of members of a certain social group, a qualitative research strategy that is sensitive to how participants interpret their social worlds may be a direction to choose”. Qualitative research is especially appropriate to investigate social issues within the social sciences (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) since the qualitative methodology provide the researcher to explore and understand the meanings that people give to social problems (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, following Kruegar (1994), qualitative research concentrates on the words and observations as experienced by informants in an attempt to describe people in their natural contexts and situations. Accordingly, qualitative research is appropriate for this study as social and cultural phenomena are being investigated.

One of the main strengths of the qualitative method is that it gives deeper insights into how social, environmental and cultural contexts influence human behaviour. It provides a comprehensive and in-depth analysis that will allow me, as the researcher, to examine feelings and perceptions of the participants and to clarify the cultural and social contexts within which people interact and express meaning. This methodology is therefore appropriate in investigating the research question of “*how and why adults learn within social movements?*”

When investigating cultural and social phenomena, quantitative research methodology may have some limitations since the quantification of textual data can result in the loss of particular social and institutional contexts within the social movement. Another limitation of the quantitative approach, in the social sciences, is that (to some extent) the research and its technicalities are not artificially detached from the political, ethical and social context because we need to be mindful during the collection of data, research is a social activity and can result in intrusions on people's lives', (Haplin and Tryona, 1994).

Notwithstanding the strength of qualitative methodology, researchers need to acknowledge that it is more difficult and time consuming to collect, analyse and categorise data when conducting qualitative research. Whereas in a quantitative study the responses of a large number of people can be measured which in turn facilitates comparisons and aggregation of data (Bryman, 2008).

3.2. Methods used to collect Data

The qualitative methodology is used throughout the study and is anchored in the interpretive paradigm which requires the researcher to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. The interpretivist epistemology recognises that reality is not an independent observable 'truth' but emerges from social interaction (Bryman, 2008). This approach favours the inductive mode of inquiry and promotes a variety of methods to collect data.

3.2.1. Data collection

Stage one

Various methods of data collection were used including unstructured observations of the respondents in their natural environment at the headquarters of the movement and making field notes and attending activities of the members. These observations allowed me to observe the behaviour of the actors, their conversations, interpersonal interactions and organisational processes and other observable human experiences.

Stage Two

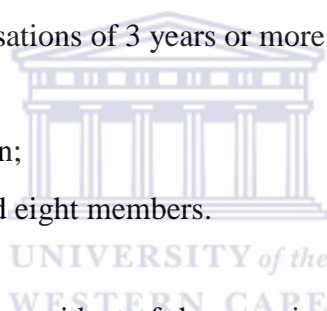
Other forms of data collection included, preliminary questions to establish a sense of the movement, sitting in at meetings, analysing minutes of meetings, collecting artefacts such as education programmes, movement pamphlets and newspaper articles on activities of the movement, and archival data of the movement.

Stage three – focus group

I conducted a focus group interview with members of the movement. Kruegar (1994, p. 239) states that a focus group is “a systematic and disciplined approach that emphasizes understandable rules and respect for other views”. Each person is important and is encouraged to present his or her views and then listen and respond to others. Although consensus sometimes occurs, it is not expected. The focus group helps people hear themselves and receive feedback from peers. This process keeps us grounded in reality. The focus group allowed the respondents to reflect on their own experiences and to explore their own thoughts.

The sample of respondents was selected according to purposive sampling criteria (Bryman, 2008) which included:

- Membership in the organisations of 3 years or more;
- Gender balance;
- Position in the organisation;
- The group does not exceed eight members.



Initial contact was made with the president of the organisation to outline the purposes of the research and to seek consent. My request (in writing) was tabled at a subsequent meeting of the movement for approval and the president informed me telephonically that permission for the study had been granted by the activists.

The participants were selected after they had been contacted by me and all gave their consent. The focus group consisted of six respondents who included the president of the movement. All participants met the criteria for participation. I gained access to rich data that enabled me to acquire a critical understanding of learning in social movements.

I only selected six participants for the focus group as I was concentrating on depth rather than breadth. Unstructured questions were drawn up in advance, and used as a guide in the discussion. The focus group sessions were recorded using a digital voice recorder and video camera with the permission of the participants as this allowed me to be an active listener.

Preparing for the focus group interview

For the focus group interview, participants were informed telephonically after obtaining a list of contact details from the president of the organisation. One day prior to the interview, two of the participants cancelled due to pressing issues or ill health. Fortunately I had the contact details of other activists who satisfied the criteria and invited them to participate.

On the day of the interview one of the participants arrived about ten minutes after the commencements of the interview because of work commitments. However, I welcomed him and briefly outlined the point under discussion and he was able to settle in and contribute to the discussion.

For the purposes of recording two devices were used namely a digital voice recorder and video recorder with the permission of the participants. I also informed the participants that their names would only be used with their permission. I felt that the video camera will make it easy to ascertain who the speakers were for transcription purposes.

I opted to transcribe the recordings myself as I believe that this will make me more familiar with the data and my ability to identify emerging themes. The digital recording device that was used made it easy to transcribe the recordings accurately. Once the interview was concluded I continued to keep the recording on which proved to be worthwhile, as Bryman (2008) points out that sometimes more interesting things are said after the interview.

Advantages of focus groups

The focus-group as a method of data collection has numerous advantages. Firstly, since my primary focus was on the activists as they shared their informal and non-formal learning experiences and the importance of this learning to the work that they do, the focus group discussion created an opportunity to discuss aspects of that learning as a collective. Furthermore, there were opportunities for dialogue rather than a one way communication if structured questions were to be used. This seems natural as the research focuses on collective learning and participation. This approach also allowed me to pose new questions should the need arise.

Secondly, I am an experienced adult education facilitator, and this experience and my understanding of group dynamics contributed positively to using the group discussion method to gather data for the study.

Limitations of focus groups

I am mindful of the limitations of focus groups. I am aware that as the researcher I have reduced control over the proceedings as opposed to the individual interviews. However, not all researchers perceive this as a disadvantage because this method allows the participants to take ownership of the interview compared to other methods. Another limitation is that some participants might dominate the discussion and give the impression that the views expressed are that of the group. However, as an adult educator and being aware of issues of dominance in groups, I have ensured that the views of all participants were heard.

3.3. Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the raw data with the aim of increasing one's own understanding of the data. The data analysis consisted of examining and the categorising the evidence in order to address the research question of how and why adults learn through their collective participation in social movements hence the purpose of the study was of paramount importance (Kruegar, 1994). Collective learning allows for themes to emerge and the data was recorded verbatim and analysed thematically. Since this is a small scale investigation, the range of data is not extensive. Accordingly, even though computer technology does make it possible to analyse qualitative data, I chose not to use computer technology due to the size of the study. Initially I coded the data manually in themes according to categories that emerged from the data as well as themes that have emerged in the literature. The aim of the coding was to enable me to capture this rich data and become more familiar with it.

The analysis included identification of data which relates to sections that illuminate and answer the inquiry question, combining and making a catalogue of related patterns into sub-themes in order to draw conclusions. This approach assisted me in managing the relevant data while disregarding irrelevant information in an attempt to make meaning.

While themes arose naturally, they must be relevant to the research question. These themes were linked to create an overall picture of collective learning and to answer the research question.

3.4. Conclusion

This section discusses the methodology selected for research which was a qualitative research and the merits of it followed by the various methods of data collection and the process to be used in analysing the data.

The next section is a presentation of the findings and analysis of the findings



SECTION FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4. 1. Introduction

In this section I discuss the findings of case study relevant to the research question – *how and why adults learn as they collectively participate in social movements*. The data collection and analysis yielded some rather interesting findings which I shall discuss and analyse.

Activists in this study worked collectively in a number of ways with each other and the broader society which included people in business, other NGO's, and within the community to share and exchange ideas and experiences, the purpose of which is to achieve the mission and vision of the movement in terms of social justice. The movement itself was used as a platform to test ideas and assumptions and develop collective knowledge. In developing this collective knowledge, the movement created learning affordances or as I would like to refer to it as “social movement affordances” to the movement activists.

So what are the key activities that these activists engaged in that resulted in learning and the creation of new knowledge? The study observed and confirmed that it was within the participation of various activities that a platform for learning was created. This was made possible through regular meetings, fund raising activities, hamper distributions, annual general meetings, strategic planning sessions, social activities and interacting with stakeholders. These included media and information, computer technologies (ICT), business and other NGO's. These learning opportunities made the activists not only active participants in their own learning but also resulted in the creation of new knowledge. These activities represented sites where learning is not an extraneous goal but rather to pursue the vision and the mission of the social movement.

The examination of archival data also yielded some important findings. What follows is an analysis of how and why activists learn through collective participation in the social movement by critically examining the key factors that facilitate learning within the movement. In analysing these factors the findings will also seek to demonstrate the heuristic nature of social movement learning.

4.2. Learning collectively through movement participation

Learning within the JJMSA is closely associated with active participation and the nature of participation in the movement. Kilgore (1999, p.5) asserts that there are many reasons why people do or do not become part of collective social action. The assertion by Kilgore ((1999) that one of the largest sources of new members in social movements is the network of existing members which include friends, is confirmed in the case of the JJMSA. In addition, another source of new members is the extended family members who became part of the movement.

4.2.1. The learning environment – facilitating collective learning

Movement meetings constitute one of the key sites for social movement learning as well as an opportunity (social movement affordance) that facilitates knowledge construction. When movement activists gather for meetings, there is a free flow of information which is supported by a non-hierarchical structure in which power is shared by the members and collective decisions are made that are largely enacted in the other activities that members engage in. Although the movement has a president, deputy president, these roles are not highlighted; hence this creates a collaborative learning space within the movement. At meetings I observed the views and opinions of people are valued and respected based on the premise that everyone knows and everyone is encouraged to share their ideas. The study observed that members actively entrenched the belief that everyone had something to say and something to teach as each activist's views and opinions were valued. Hence individuals are not seen as blank slates to be acted upon. Members feel a sense of worthiness and this assists in deepening their connectedness with the movement. This was demonstrated during the focus group interview when the former president of the movement encouraged other activists to speak in the beginning of the interview by saying,

[...] why don't you add to that? You have been there from the beginning.

(Interviewee 6, 13.04.2013,)

A non-threatening culture has been established within the movement which allowed the movement activists to coordinate thoughts and contribute positively towards the group processes. Such conditions created a fertile ground for learning, creating new knowledge and creativity which is harnessed and shared by creating a supportive and positive learning

environment as a pedagogic tool. This is confirmed by interviewee 4 who equates interaction within the movement with social interaction within a supportive family:

We are a family and we support the development of each other in the movement to eh... collective family. We are aware of each other's distresses and situation and circumstances and we support each other in personal difficulties. This unifies people toward a single objective. (Interviewee 4, 13.04.2013).

Another interviewee added:

Being part of this organisation has enriched me. I have also benefited spiritually and my contributions have benefited the disadvantaged communities. I am now more involved and decided to bring my wife into the movement. I find it uplifting and I have developed more professionally. (Interviewee 5, 13.04.2013).

I also noted at that each of the meetings I attended, activists brought light snacks which they partook of collectively after the conclusion of the meeting. During this time they continued to engage in discussion concerning the meeting that had just concluded or matters relating to their personal lives. These social events were not only confined to this but also extended to other social gatherings outside of the movement. Activists are involved in setting a day aside annually for a get together. This takes the form of a braai, boat trips or other similar gatherings to which invitations are extended to the activists' family. Interviewee 2 said,

We also have social gatherings for our members outside of the forum. It's so that we can let loose. The boat trips are always fun and exciting and we look forward to it. (13.04.2013).

Kilgore, (1999) identifies collective identity, group consciousness, solidarity and organisation as important components of collective development within groups. Solidarity, she maintains, "is a general feeling of unity and affinity among members of a group," (p.2). Following Kilgore, I argue that the social activities, as mentioned above, that the JJMSA engages in, is one of the contributing factors in strengthening solidarity in the group which results in the group becoming more confident of itself as agents for change.

Following Hammond *et al* (2001, p.11), the learning environment plays a critical role in how people learn. Greater perceptual development and learning will occur in environments that

are rich in terms of stimuli. JJSMA clearly demonstrates that it provides a rich learning environment for the creation and construction of new knowledge collectively.

4.3. Learning collectively by making women’s voices heard.

I noted with great interest that women occupied key positions in the movement. The roles of treasurer, president and deputy president were occupied by women. People defined themselves not by their gender but rather by their roles in the movement. It became clear to me as a researcher that a deliberate attempt was being made to give voices to women within the movement. Interviewee 6 maintained,

In the JJMSA everyone is equal. We have no gender bias. Everyone has a role to play. Women provide support to us and we are strengthened, not weakened by their presence. What binds us all together is our level of commitment. We got the zest and vigour. Members are unwavering, (13.04.2013).

Interviewee 3 passionately added that,

We cannot discount the fact that woman are valuable in the organisation and they have created a positive environment, (13.04.2013).

Following Kilgore (1999, p. 197), “a sense of worthiness adds confidence to agency.” The activists, during the focus group interview and my observations of other movement activities, demonstrated these qualities and this was also evident amongst the female activists who felt free to contribute to discussions at meetings and other activities that the movement engaged in. In fact, the views of women were actively sought by other male activists thereby creating an element of trust amongst activists. According to Walters and Manicon (1996, p. 15), trust is an important condition for a learning space regarding women. Time away from the normal day to day life creates an important space for reflection and understanding of social relations in a much broader perspective. The experience of community involvement away from home and making a worthwhile contribution while being valued at the same time results in a positive shift in confidence for women and understanding of themselves. Interviewee 1, a female and a senior citizen with no formal education as she did not have the opportunity, said,

I am an active member of JJMSA and it is such a pleasure working for the downtrodden people. I meet and interact with people of all races and religious

groups and I enjoy it. I look forward to meetings and hamper distributions and I love doing what I do, (Interviewee 1, 13.04.2013).

How did the women come to occupy these key roles? The activists had strategised on a system of mentoring and coaching. Novice activists would shadow leading men and women activists who are in key positions. The leading activist would then mentor and coach the novices in order to learn the requirements of the different roles and foster the learning of processes, content, critical thinking. This strategy served a threefold purpose within the movement:

- Firstly, it was to facilitate and ensure succession planning;
- Secondly, to ensure the sustainability of the movement; and
- Finally, to ensure that women are not marginalised within the movement.

In terms of the other positions that women held, for example treasurer, here her specific strength in the area of finances was harnessed. Mentoring and coaching as a form of empowerment proved to be an effective tool used by the movement.

Foley (1999) highlights that it is through interaction in a shared space that women are able to develop critical analyses of the material and ideological forces that shape their lives. Hence, the capacity for a distinct social vision exists that seeks to provide a voice to those marginalised women previously ‘silenced’ (Walters & Manicom, 1996). JJMSA, through the creation of these spaces, strengthened and perpetuated the involvement and continuous learning of women and builds on what emerges from those collectively participating. This approach is consistent with feminist popular education which acknowledges the importance of connecting in a shared space to foster the reframing of identity and the building of confidence and self-esteem (Walters & Manicom, 1996).

Making women’s voices heard within JJMSA bears testimony to the fact that JJMSA is serious about praxis in transforming their organisational culture towards gender justice by ensuring that rights can be negotiated and made real.

4.4. Learning collectively through dispersed educator and learner roles

In an attempt to achieve the aims of the movement, there are various sub-committees each entrusted with specific tasks ranging from fund raising, finances, public relations, ICT,

packaging and distribution, recruitment and organisation of volunteers to buying and pricing of groceries. Activists within JJMSA come from very diverse educational backgrounds. Some have tertiary education and are professionals while others have very little formal education. Team leaders were self-selected according to specific strengths that they possessed within each of these committees.

Activists took on the role of educator by outlining requirements of that specific committees and empowering members to execute these tasks. Within these committees, activists were empowered through debate, dialogue and discussion of the key issues in order to arrive at decisions on what they felt would be best practise in achieving the objective set by that specific committee/s. Activists collaborated to induce common understanding and developed strategies for action. An example these processes were observed when the Fund Raising Committee found that they had not met their targets in order to purchase groceries for the hampers. The committee collectively agreed to partner with other stakeholders and broaden their base to include other cultural and civic organisations and intensify their campaign to this end.

In another instant I observed that the main form of media used was the print media to campaign. However, now this has expanded to include ICT in the form of a website, Facebook, and twitter in order to communicate more broadly with society locally and nationally and to a limited extent, globally.

This transformation was brought through critically interrogating their current practises, by activists who were more technologically savvy. These movement intellectuals introduced the idea of ICT which would advance their campaign in creating awareness among ordinary citizens about their social responsibility towards the less fortunate sectors of society. Using a dialogic process activists were able to collectively produce a new understanding and consequently new knowledge was constructed, regarding the use of ICT as a medium to advance the cause of the movement. This resulted in roles and responsibilities being expanded to maintain and advance the new concepts of Facebook, twitter and the webpage.

I also noted with interest that many activists transported ideas, skills, expertise and knowledge from their workplaces and other organisations to the movement. One of the members is an administrator with a wealth of experience in organising at the workplace. From the archival material I found a booklet outlining key performance area, objectives,

team leader, team members, targets outcome and successes and re-valuation of each subcommittee. The author of the booklet took on the role of educator by doing a presentation, explaining and discussing and opening the floor for further discussion on this document that he had compiled. Members made their inputs and the document was adopted for implementation. This form of dispersed educator roles and distributed leadership, and active participation maximized the learning.

Furthermore many of the activists also belong to other social organisations,

I also belong to another organisation which is solely and wholeheartedly involved in serving others. Joining JJMSA brought my affiliations parallel to it. I learnt a lot from JJ. I presented my views and observances from here to there, away from the urban area. I introduced these ideas there. The concepts and ideology may differ and is sometimes fixed but that organisation is 35 years old and is involved in community work. [...]

He went on to add,

I also belong to an athletic club where I perform many administrative functions. I have brought these skills to JJ..eh....like meeting procedures, (Interviewee 3, 13.04.2013).

These organisational skills of the members were shared with other members through explanations and discussions. On one occasion I observed one of the activists drawing a diagram of a floor plan for the collection, packing and distribution of food hampers. He went on to explain the thinking behind that plan. Other activists were invited to make their inputs, and collectively the members agreed on the plan with minor adjustments. The initiator of the floor plan was open to new ideas from other activists and was willing to listen to their suggestions. Other activists were engaged by listening, observing, being present, and interacting in a spirit of camaraderie.

In another example of dispersed educator roles, during one of the meetings the Finance Committee observed that financial record keeping was not as it should be because activists lacked the necessary knowledge and expertise to do so. Activists found manual control of funds quite difficult as relevant documents were being incorrectly completed making it difficult to reconcile the accounting books.

The team leader of the Finance Committee (who works in the financial services sector) went on to inform all activists that at the next meeting she would have a short workshop on record keeping and would devise a reconciliation sheet which would make activist tasks easier as this relates to maintaining financial records.

At the next meeting I will show you how to use these forms correctly so that we do not have the same problem again. We are experiencing many problems because these forms are not correctly filled in, (February 2013).

At a follow up meeting this idea prompted further inquiry regarding collection of cash which was becoming challenging which in turn prompted further discussion and generating of ideas to address this challenge. Out of the discussion it emerged that a debit order form be compiled and be made available to sponsors and donors who could deposit money directly into the movement's bank account.

Marsick and Watkins (2001, p. 30) are of the view that success of the implementation of new strategies “depends on drawing on capabilities that are adequate to the task.” Success is also dependant on the availability of appropriate resources which include people from whom to learn and willingness and motivation to learn. However, Friere (1996) argued for a particular kind of pedagogy which is dialectical and where the teacher becomes the learner and the learner transforms into the teacher. Both experience and expertise is reflected on collectively. In this “engaged pedagogy” as Hooks (1994) refers to it (In Hall and Clover, 2012, p. 11), both teacher and learner are active participants. My observations allow me to conclude that this form of praxis is therefore an important learning component within the JJMSA.

Given the diverse backgrounds of the movement activists, such human resources, expertise and knowledge are harnessed, thus steering the movement closer towards its goals. This diversity also facilitates collective learning and collaborative learning within the movement. Accordingly, the collective learning and the dispersed educator roles are firmly embedded in the organisational structure of the movement and have become the agency for the creation of new knowledge.

These social movement actions by ‘movement intellectuals,’ derive their meaning from the context in which they are located and bring understanding and sometimes derive understanding out of it (Eyerman and Jamieson, 1991).

This learning cycle is collective in nature rather than an individual process as explicated in experiential learning theory. This process allows the learners to see how different elements of their individual experiences can be connected together (Cooper, 2006).

4.5. Learning collectively through tension and conflict

Discussions within the JJMSA are often robust and sometimes not everyone agrees, but everyone is prepared to listen. Information is often refashioned to suit the context of the movement and its needs in achieving its aims. This was demonstrated in a contradiction that emerged within the movement regarding its philosophy and goals. One of the goals of the movement is to promote community participation by encouraging ordinary individuals and families in the community to donate monies towards the underprivileged. However, a number of big businesses had stepped forward to assist as a result of JJMSA's campaign. This was in conflict with the philosophy of the movement which placed emphasis on the roles of ordinary citizens in contributing towards the social upliftment of society.

Through a dialogic process members collaborated and negotiated and renegotiated a way forward in dealing with this tension. Members were then able to come to a common understanding. It was decided that sponsors would be accepted from businesses but there would be no advertising or special consideration given towards businesses.

This decision was later reviewed by the members as the number of sponsors from businesses grew and this had a positive effect on the campaign. Members once again had to renegotiate their original stance. Different views were presented and through a collaborative process, a newer understanding emerged. This decision making process finally concluded that individuals from the business sector would be considered only as guest speakers. The rationale for this was that they could encourage members of the public to fulfil their roles in the social upliftment of society by speaking at annual general meetings or by distributing hampers.

This process of knowledge creation seems similar to Hendricks' (2012) theorisation of collaborative learning. Tracing the theorisation of collaborative learning from Paulo Freire (1990), Hendricks (2012, p. 313), following Freire (1990), explains that knowledge as socially constituted emerges *only* through a process of invention and re-invention as people continue to speculate, estimate and test their own insights as they "pursue in the world, *with the world and with each other*". He further explains that the process of knowledge

construction involves processes of negotiations and re-negotiations with others since we live in a symbolic world of shared social rules and values. Collective learning, as a “collaborative learning strategy allows for ‘knowledge’ to emerge and/or to be restructured/reconstituted as individuals [activists] with differing levels of experiences, viewpoints and prior knowledge negotiate meaning” (Hendricks, 2012, p. 313), in new contexts and for a new purposes. This is precisely how Interviewee 3 and Interviewee 6 experienced knowledge construction within the JJMSA:

We resolve conflict [differing perspectives] through negotiation. It is a process where we tease out ideas. We look at different angles and negotiate what is the best way forward,(13.04.2013).

Interviewee 6 added that:

Sometimes we think about it, and agree to brainstorm at the next meeting so we can better formulate our ideas and decide if we agree or disagree, (13.04.2013).

Kigore (1999) confirms that conflict is a necessary component of collective development. Following Kilgore, I agree that it is in the face of conflict within JJMSA that the activists construct meaning. Although tension and conflict exists within JJMSA, it arises as a by-product of participation and robust interaction as individual and collective identities are continually negotiated and reformed. These tensions and contradictions in themselves become an important element in the creation of new knowledge and understanding.

4.6. Collective Reflective learning

The research found reflective learning was an important practise that the activists engaged in, in order to improve their practises and as a way by which they acquired new knowledge and skills. Kristine (2007) is of the opinion that when we reflect, we recall essential events or experiences in our lives which regulate what we are later able to observe, reminisce about, develop, and understand.

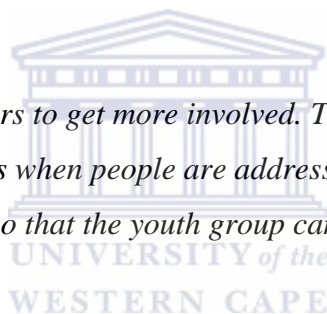
Activists constantly reflect on past experiences in order to improve their current practises. The focus group interview made that abundantly clear as the interviewees reflected on some of these practises. Interviewee 2 said:

After the hamper distribution we had an Imbizo in which we strategised on ways to improve for the next year. During one of these imbizos we noted that eh.. the youth were not as involved in the community as we would like them to be. So now all volunteers are recognized when we give certificates as incentives at a public AGM, (13.04.2013).

These movement activists were able to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their campaign and at a level they gained a deeper understanding of learning by doing and reflecting, which is a significant pedagogic tool in evaluation.

A rather interesting and noteworthy discussion amongst the activists ensued during the focus group interview as they started reflecting on some of their practises completely oblivious of my presence. One of the activists was particularly unhappy about the poor involvement of the youth and a discussion emerged and ideas were being generated amongst them as interviewee 4 said,

Maybe we need the teachers to get more involved. Through teachers we can spread the word at schools when people are addressing assemblies to conscientise the learners so that the youth group can be expanded,
(13.04.2013).



Interviewee 6 also suggested that members should start campaigning actively at schools to raise awareness about community participation and social action. This type of direct intervention they felt would yield more positive outcomes.

The other activists thought that this was a good idea and a discussion concerning the implementation of this idea pursued before they reminded themselves that they had strayed from their original discussion and quickly refocused.

This form of reflective activity clearly demonstrates that reflection is an important component of how and why activists learn collectively. This was further confirmed when interviewee 3 said:

We observed that people were being bussed from long distances to one venue in order to collect the food hampers; and it took a lot of time; and it was costly. We came up with the concept to expand our activities to other regions

instead of bussing people. Now we also have a chapter in the Durban South region so people do not have to travel great distances,(13.04.2013).

Interviewee 4 went on to explain how the process unfolded and the logistics that were involved in the implementation of that idea:

We created how the whole process works regarding the... logistics and distribution and we came up with the idea of volunteers as this was a mammoth task. We have grown from 2000 when we startedonly distributed 250 hampers to now we distribute 6000. We have evolved in many ways (13.04.2013).

Alluding to the document on subcommittees which I mentioned earlier under **dispersed educator roles**, I noted that this document also catered for evaluation. This was done in terms of the goals set out by each subcommittee and then evaluating its level of success. Through a process of discussion and negotiation, the movement activists, strategised on how to improve their practises in order to achieve the goals of the movement. This form of monitoring and evaluating further confirms that activists examined and reflected on activities within each of the sub-committees as well as the movement as a whole.

Learning through reflection on our everyday activities is how most of us learn. We also refer to it as learning from experience, in past encounters, after seeing and understanding what effects our actions had and then anticipate what would follow from such an action. We refer to it as reflection on previous learning from life and work experience but in this case from participation in a social movement. These collective spaces provide members with opportunities to share and compare experiences and develop new understandings, (Cooper, 2006).

This study concluded that reflection was a critical component of the learning process within the JJSMA as it not only contributed significantly to the activists personal growth but also contributed to the vast expansion of the movement since its humble beginnings in 2000. With this in mind I argue that the process of collective reflection is a critical pedagogic tool through which the JJMSA was able to transform itself.

4.7. Conclusion

In this section I have presented the key findings and analysis of the data collected. To this end I have drawn on preliminary questions to establish a sense of the movement, sitting in at meetings, analysing minutes of meetings, collecting artefacts such as education programmes, movement pamphlets and newspaper articles on activities of the movement, archival data of the movement, the focus group interview and insights of other researchers in this field of study.

The next section concludes this paper.



SECTION FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This study concerned itself with collective participatory learning in social movements. Theoretically the study was located within in the field of social movement learning. Accordingly the JJMSA was identified as the primary site for data collection where social movement learning occurred. The study examined the question *of how and why activists learn as they collectively participate in social movements.*

5.2 Key Findings

The study confirmed that the JJMSA creates spaces for collective participatory production of knowledge and insight and builds on what emerges from experiences of those actively participating. The movement and its activities are sites for the generation of new knowledge about improving the conditions of the disadvantaged and impoverished sectors of communities. These activities are driven by ideas, expertise, experience, prior knowledge and passion of its members and although the movement does not formally document the nature and extent of the learning, it had distinct pedagogic features. Through the various, methods of data collection, the nature and extent of the collective participatory learning became abundantly clear. This learning was supported by “social movement affordances.”

The rest of this section summarises these learning affordances. The JJMSA created a myriad of opportunities for activists to learn. These included learning collectively: through a positive learning environment, through dispersed educator role, by giving voices to women and through collective reflective learning.

5.2.1 Learning is facilitated by a positive learning environment

The study observed that the JJMSA had created ideal conditions to facilitate the learning process. This was made possible through mutual respect, valuing of opinions and views of each other and a free flow of information. The engendering of solidarity among activists also served as a catalyst to facilitate learning. The study observed that one of the unique features of developing solidarity was social gatherings.

5.2.2 Making women’s voices heard

The movement makes deliberate and conscious efforts to ensure that the voices of woman are heard. This was demonstrated by the fact that women occupied key positions in the movement. Members felt strengthened by the presence of women and a strategy that was used was mentoring and coaching to ensure that women are not marginalised.

5.2.3 Collective learning through dispersed educator roles.

Learning through dispersed educator roles became one of the distinguishing features for the creation of new knowledge within the JJMSA. Seeing collective learning through the lens of dispersed educator roles allowed me, as the researcher, to fully appreciate the impact of informal, incidental or as I would like to call it “alternate education.”

5.2.4. Learning through tension and conflict

Tension and conflict are an integral component of any organisation, however, how the group deals with it will decide on the value of the learning that it has to offer. This study confirms that tension and conflict offer a valuable platform for learning when a dialogic method is used to test ideas and when the actors are prepared to negotiate and renegotiate ideas. We can therefore conclude that tension and conflict contribute to constructing new meaning and creating new understanding.

5.2.5. Collective reflective learning.

This study has confirmed that reflective learning was used as an important pedagogical tool to improve on current practises within JJMSA. This reflection took the form of “imbizos” (collective councils) as the activists referred to it. From the focus group discussion it became evident that reflection is an ongoing process and organisational structure and subcommittees cater for continuous monitoring and evaluation of practises.

5.3. Implications for further research

While this study concerned itself with learning within social movements, it is silent on learning by people outside of these movements which is often informal and sometimes intentional. It would be interesting to pursue further research in assessing and analysing the impact of social movements as change agents on broader society.

Greater research is also required in trying to understand the relationship between the individual and the group in social movements as this is often a rather complex relationship that requires further explanation.

Finally, although this study confirmed that there were various factors that facilitated and enhanced learning within the JJMSA, this study could not confirm any factors that hindered learning within the social movement. Further investigation is recommended to establish if they do exist and to what extent.

5.4 Concluding comments

The ‘social movement affordances’ within JJMSA emphasised collective participation as a conduit for learning within the movement, which in turn created a rich platform for learning. This process resulted in both personal and collective growth. The learning platform prioritised the role of the movement in bringing about change both within and outside of the movement.

The study has confirmed that the JJMSA as a social movement is an important and rich site of learning. I argue that unlike most accredited learning, that are geared towards workplace readiness, profits and meeting the challenges of the global economy, social movement learning is informal in nature. Most learning is intentional and serves a social purpose that has far reaching implications and impact on society. It therefore needs to be acknowledged as an alternate form of education.

Social movements serve to strengthen social cohesion, democratic participation and citizen engagement and given these important functions that they serve, I suggest that as practitioners’, we devote greater time and energy in attempting to get a clear understanding of social movement learning. This would assist us to look at new paradigms in order to create new processes and programmes that adjust to educational practises to suit our new times. Social movement learning might just be the seed to disseminate a new education system.

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APPENDECIS

APPENDIX 1

56 Steelcastle Avenue

Castlehill

Newlands West

Durban

05 September 2012

The President

Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Permission to use JJMSA as a site for research

I am Ms Molly Ramlachan, a registered student at the University of the Western Cape (student number 3179988). I am currently pursuing my Masters degree in Adult Learning and Global Change. My research area focuses on learning in social movements. To this end I would like to request permission to use Jyoti Jivanam Movement of South Africa as a site for my research.

As a volunteer, I have observed that the movement has grown from strength to strength over the years, so this growth has sparked my interest and I would really like investigate the learning within the movement.

I trust that my request would meet with your approval.

Yours in Education

Ms Molly Ramlachan

APPENDIX 2

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW AND QUESTIONS (03.04 2013)

Introduction

For the focus group interview, I thanked everyone for making the time for the interview. I then introduced myself and explained the purpose of the interview. Permission was sought from the participants to record the interview using digital technology and I outlined the format for the interview. Furthermore I explained that the choice of venue, (headquarters of the movement) provided a natural setting where activists normally interact with each other. I started the interview by asking participants to identify themselves and what they do in terms of occupation.

Questions

1. What attracted you to become activists within this movement?
2. What activities have you been involved in within the movement and what role did you play in initiating, or contributing to the activities?
3. How do you decide on a plan of action?
4. Have you participated in initiatives where a new idea was discussed or the movement wanted to test ideas;
5. Were you involved in discussions when all activists have not agreed to the initial proposal or ideas? How did you come to a common understanding?
6. Do you participate in other social organisations and do you bring ideas generated in those organisations back into the movement or vice versa. Can you tell me about that?
7. Have you ever used ideas/knowledge that you have learnt in the movement in other contexts of your lives?
8. I see that women hold key positions in this movement. Can you tell me about that?

APPENDIX 3

ETHICS STATEMENT

This research will be conducted in accordance with the Research Policy of the University of the Western Cape and the Declaration of Helsinki which lays down the foundation for agreed standards and good practise (Research Policy, 2009).

In keeping with these standards I will get informed consent from the activists in the movement, firstly to conduct the research, to conduct interviews, to gain access to meetings, activities and archival material. Furthermore I will ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants should they desire this. This will be done by changing names if necessary or using numbers instead of names. Consent will be obtained from the participants prior to the use of any recording devices. I am also mindful that in some instances participants may object to the use of recording devices as has been cited in Bryman (2008). All participants in this research will be volunteers but at the same time satisfying the selection criteria.


I am aware of my duty of honesty and integrity first to myself and to the university and I shall ensure that I do not compromise the integrity and honesty of this research in any way.


WESTERN CAPE

APPENDIX 4

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 1:	FINANCE
<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To keep record and report on all financial transactions, statements monthly as collections progress. • To hand, monitor and collect all collection books for reconciliation. • To keep the movement aware of the funds collected month by month. • To monitor the debit order system working towards the campaign of obtaining 1000 signed debit orders. 	
TEAM LEADER	Prema
<p>TEAM MEMBERS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-</p>	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
<p>OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ 	
RE-EVALUATION:	



KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 2:	REQUEST BY RECIPIENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS BY DONORS
<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create a database of recipients and donors. (Ajay has started this already). • To check amounts collected by recipients versus their contributions. • To encourage bulk recipients to contribute. • To validate recipients that are genuinely destitute. • To identify bulk donors as potential guest of honours or special guests. • To invite recipients and bulk donors to our AGM 	
TEAM LEADER	Ben
TEAM MEMBERS	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES:	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤
RE-EVALUATION:	

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 3:	PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MEDIA
OBJECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify a Guest of Honour in consultation with EXEC. • To prepare program and program host • To draft appeal letter maximize awareness. • To do the media release article with fotos and radio. • To update the website. • To prepare and adapt logistical plan 	
TEAM LEADER	
TEAM MEMBERS <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>UNIVERSITY of the WESTERN CAPE</p> </div>	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ 	
RE-EVALUATION:	


KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 4:	RECEIVING, PACKING AND BULK DISTRIBUTION
OBJECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive and receipt bulk goods. • To plan and prepare goods on the floor as per the plan. • To pack as per the items in a conveyor belt system as per the plan. • To bulk distribute on Saturday jointly checking each for financial contributions as well. • To distribute to card holding recipients on the day of the program. 	
TEAM LEADER	Roy
TEAM MEMBERS	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ 	
RE-EVALUATION:	



KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 5:	VOLUNTEERS – YOUTH/SENIOR CITIZENS/LONG SERVING MEMBERS
<p>OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continuously impress on volunteers. • To create a database of all volunteers. • To identify a youth volunteer to program host. • To call on volunteers to assist with the receiving, packing and distribution. • To encourage youth to fill out KIP forms • To assist the recipients with carrying of the hampers. 	
TEAM LEADER	S
<p>TEAM MEMBERS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">-</p>	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
<p>OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ 	
RE-EVALUATION:	

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 6:	FUNDRAISING AND SPONSORSHIP
OBJECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To look at creative ways to raise funds eg Bhangra etc. • To approach big business for bulk donations without advertising. • To encourage children to save and contribute. • To enter funding competitions to raise funds 	
TEAM LEADER	Doc
TEAM MEMBERS	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ 	
RE-EVALUATION:	



KEY PERFORMANCE AREA 7:	BUYING AND PRICING
OBJECTIVES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To examine and compare prices of hamper items as per the list. • To engage with other organizations and collectively strengthen our buying power. • To start negotiating and confirming prices early as per our targets. • To identify retailers that are supportive of community organizations. • To approach retailers by appeal letter and list of hamper items. 	
TEAM LEADER	
TEAM MEMBERS	
DUE/TARGET DATE:	
OUTCOME/SUCCESSSES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ 	
RE-EVALUATION:	