Student movement, political development and modernisation in India.

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STUDENT MOVEMENT, POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, AND MODERNISATION IN INDIA

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By
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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the student movement in India is contingent on an investigation of the political, psychological, and social determinants. It is posited that a sense of frustration and a sense of alienation is produced by certain socio-economic conditions. Accordingly the major variables in this analysis are (a) conducive social conditions, (b) intensity and scope of frustration, and (c) mediating situational factors.

Conducive social conditions, as generated by the process of modernization would refer to changes in economic conditions, poor teaching facilities, defects in the educational system, irrelevance of education to life experiences, patterns of socialisation, social mobility and Sanskritization, and the impact of certain other aspects of modernization. The sense of frustration is heightened by unsatisfied expectations, a sense of alienation, and distrust, combined with an emerging sense of self-efficacy and commitment.

Examples of mediating situational factors would include, coercive controls by administrators, police legislators and academicians, opposing fee increases, justifications for violence, walk out on exams, beating of bus conductors, caste politics, the language dilemma and others.

The nature of each of these situational factors
and the interaction of these factors with a diffused (collective) sense of discontent determine the occurrence as well as the magnitude of student unrest.

The use of different data sources is restricted to the time periods of 1947-1972. They include newspaper and magazine reports, special research publications, and also reports of commissions. The method employed involves primarily an interpretative analysis of library sources and statistical data, as produced by some research works. The major goal is to delineate the relationship among the basic social, economic, political, and psychological determinants of student-activism, and the relative policy outputs, which in turn acts as a feedback mechanism for further inputs, the entire phenomenon thus assumes a cyclical nature.

Our further concern would be to examine the nature of the output, and analyse further the contribution of students to the process of modernisation and political development that is going on in India. In other words we would try to highlight the progressive and retrogressive outputs of the student movement, and its implications for the process of political development and modernisation. To facilitate an analysis of the above nature, a description of the conditions which the student community defines as intolerable and sufficient for rebellion, becomes necessary. Subsidiary questions are raised, for instance how are the students
building the bridge from "traditional" to the "modern"?
Are their horizons widening?

Our concern would also lie in the belief that India is increasingly developing into a "bargaining culture", and as much the voice of the student community, must be legitimised. India is moving from a stratified system of interaction, whereby the traditional patterns of interaction between the students and the authorities are becoming dysfunctional. Student unrest and violence will continue unless new modes of interaction are woven into the culture.
INTRODUCTION

Description of student demonstrations are an almost daily occurrence in the Indian newspapers. It is a world wide situation, and though causes have varied a great deal from area to area, one factor does seem to be present in all cases, that is the need to adapt to rapid economic and social change.

Student disturbances triggered by political situations are not always useful for gaining an insight into the reasons underlying student unrest, as are many other demonstrations. Even the leftist student movement if considered as a political phenomenon is still a dependent variable to be influenced by independent societal variables. We still have to explain why some students become activists and radicals while others remain ambivalent. A study of this nature belongs to the realm of political sociology. A constant cannot explain variation, and especially a phenomenon as general as "Student-Activism". One reason for getting involved with causes is that, directly or indirectly, the process of modernisation itself has sown discontent among the young.

The Indian University is closely tied to its society and shares many of the characteristics and contradictions of modern life. Caste and regional affiliations are
seen as a normal criteria for academic appointments, and factional politics within the University bear a marked resemblance to political infighting in national life. Due to the factional nature of state and local politics in India, the University is often a battle ground in caste and regional alignments. Students attempt to use family influence in order to gain admittance to the University or they resort to agitational politics to change an exam result. Political, social, economic, and psychological issues are intertwined in India and all have contributed to student unrest. The question that concerns us is therefore what are some of the under surface changes and conditions that could explain the rising human tension.

A revolution of expectation sweeps the land. People at all levels want material goods, comforts, better jobs. The traditional attitude of resignation to conditions is changing to hope, and attendant tension and anxiety. Improvements can arise only from discontent, only from tension and a conscious effort to change the course of destiny. This change in expectations is resulting in some frustration and bitterness, but then some creative change is also coming about.

Social change in India is taking place more rapidly than most realize. India is changing from a closed system to an open society, in which there is a growing importance to
individual freedom and rights, and where increased social interaction is becoming necessary.

So in order to understand student unrest, attitudes and behaviour, we need a perspective which examines them in their total social environment.

**Background.**

The student role in India has a long history. The earliest evidence of direct political activity on the part of the students records an incident in Calcutta during the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1905, students in Eden Hindu Hostel burned Lord Curzon in effigy and boycotted college examinations to protest against the government decision to partition the province of Bengal. During the next few years, Bengali students were among the most active participants in the early Swadeshi-Movement.¹

According to a report of the Government Sedition Committee of 1918, 68 out of 186 arrested in Bengal, between 1907-1917 for revolutionary activities were students, and another 16 were teachers in schools and colleges. In Maharashtra, Upendra Nath and V. D. Sarvakar formed the young Indian League in 1906, and in Punjab a group known as Nai-

¹The Swadeshi Movement required of the Indians to boycott foreign goods, especially British goods.
Hava (New-Wind) was formed to mobilise students and youth groups for revolutionary purposes. A National Council of Education was inaugurated for Indianising the contents of education.

In the nationalist ferment following World War I, Indian political leaders urged the students in the humanities and social sciences to leave schools and colleges and join the non-cooperation movement launched by the Congress party against the British.

In 1928, the "All Bengal Students Association" was founded and claimed a membership of 20,000. It published a journal, actively demanded that Calcutta University modify the examination system, and took part in the Satyagraha movement led by Gandhi in 1930. Although ABSA was banned, student militancy in Bengal continued to increase, revolutionary slogans were popular, and several attempts were made to assassinate high government officials.

In 1936, the All India Student Federation came into existence and within two years claimed 50,000 members. Soon internal conflicts broke out between Communist students and Non-Communist students. The Communist section led by K. M. Ashraf was critical of the Indian National Congress leadership.

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and favoured more militant measures against the British. In December 1940, at the All India Session of the AISF at Nagpur, the Communists and Nationalists parted ways. The Muslim students also disassociated and formed an All India Muslim Student Association to support the Muslim League party in its demand for Pakistan.

During the Quit India movement, the students succeeded in closing most of the colleges for extended periods and involved masses of students in this struggle. Thousands were jailed and many thousands were dismissed from their colleges for participating in political activity. Students were among the most active elements in the struggle and were responsible for much of the sabotage activity which harassed the British authorities. The militancy of the 1942 movement was retained on a reduced scale, till the end of the independence struggle.\(^3\)

At the time of the independence struggle there were two major national students organisations in India, viz; the All India Student Federation, and the Student Congress. Several parties had their own smaller student organisations. Samajvadi Yovak Sabha (Socialist sponsored Young Socialist League), the progressive student union (Marxist sponsored),

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 165.
the Hindu Student Federation, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (sponsored by the Hindu communal parties).

**Student Tradition.**

The foregoing would reveal that the students were abundantly politicised. Congress leadership actively sought the association of students in the struggle for independence. Being young and enlightened they also realised the need of participating in the national movement. Entering the University took on the overtones of a political act. Many interrupted their University career and committed themselves to a life-time of political agitation. In fact the educational institutions also served as recruiting grounds for political parties. One permanent consequence of this involvement was that the students acquired the oppositional frame of mind and learned agitational techniques. By the time of independence, there was thus a tradition of student's opposition to established authority.

**Congress Attitude after Independence.**

After independence the Congress leaders declared that there was no further need for a national student political movement, and advised students to eschew politics. Nehru said, "students are inclined to think that the main
object of their organisation is to hurl gratuitous advice at the government, the United-Nations and the world at large. That is not a Student-Movement".

The All India Student Federation was abandoned by Congress leaders who had earlier sponsored and guided its affairs. The Congress Party made a serious attempt to divert the students to "constructive, nation building, community development and social services type of activity". It established a Youth Department which claimed to have a membership of 200,000. Similar attempts were made by the Indian Ministry of Education encouraging student activities along these lines. However it was not possible to divert the students from political activities altogether. They soon began to see that the Congress was becoming fat with power, that the Congress ministers were profiting from permits and licenses. The oppositional frame of mind referred to above led to a disenchantment with the ruling party and attracted them to the opposition parties.

Eager to push students out of politics, Congress lost ground to the opposition parties, who were winning in the meantime student participation for electioneering work against the existing authorities.\(^5\)

\(^4\)Myron Wiener, op. _cit._, p. 167.

A Theoretical Statement of the Problem.

Political scientists have been increasingly interested in studying the role of students in recent years, and their impact on the social, political and economic development of a society. Student organisations and movements have played an important part in bringing about social change, notably educational, political, and social. India is the biggest "functioning democracy" in Asia and has the largest number of University students after America and Russia. Having such a unique position it is appropriate to study the role of students in stimulating educational reforms, political changes and in creating modernising forces within the Indian society.

By the time of independence the students had already established a tradition of hostility and opposition to established authority. There is a fundamental identity in the movements of the two periods, namely hostility against existing authority, British then, and Indian now.

There is a sense in which student participation in the Indian Nationalist Movement was a functional equivalent of the present agitation. Both have a manifest hostility to established authority. Both have expressed hostility to bureaucratic examinations, and the coming burden of adult responsibilities.6

The only difference is that the pre-independence hostility to established authority, like the government, the

6Edward Shils, "Student Politics and University in India", in Philip G. Altbach, op. cit., p. 2.
police, college, and University teachers and the academic discipline was legitimated by self confident and powerful leaders like M. Gandhi, J. Nehru, and the implicit approval of their parents and many teachers.

Today however the ruling elite and the elders in the society do not legitimise the hostility of the students, as we shall see in the later pages. The opposition parties endorse, and very often are even responsible for stirring up, a storm in the student community, but they use it for their own private ends. Indian agitation is so infrequently and discontinuously political because it has no well acknowledged, and politically concerned authority to guide it and to focus on political things. The students are unhappy because they do not have that guidance, and scarcely have the power to focus on a political object themselves.\(^7\) I have emphasised this point elsewhere in some detail. Here it would suffice to mention that the students rarely attack the Government, and the regime, instead they attack all kinds of secondary authorities, such as the Vice Chancellor, Collectors, Police-Officers, Bus-drivers, Post-Offices, and Railway stations. They do not attack the centre of the system. When policy failures reflect the inadequacy of social, economic, and political, arrangements, and institutions, the

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 5.
students explicitly question the academic values rather than social and political values. Even the opposition parties gravitate the students towards the academic issues first, as these issues seem to be more relevant to the student community, of course when the agitation flares up, it is used by the opposition parties to strike at the inadequacies of the incumbent regime.

The radical change occurring in the government, the caste, the system and the family, as India seeks to change from a traditional to a highly industrialised society, are indeed causing conditions which are structurally conducive to frustration, insecurity and unrest.

Students feel strongly that through their demonstrations, whether their goals be short term, such as changing an examination or long term, such as reducing fees, they gain the power to change some aspect of their lives. Student-activism gives the politically oriented students an opportunity to prepare for a political career. Riots, mass protest and violence are an indication of the gulf that separates the emerging elites from incorporation into the social and political order of the nation.  

It is difficult to agree with Shils' contention that the Indian student agitation is relatively apolitical. Student agitation instead bears a marked resemblance to the activities of other factions and opposition groups in India who are not attacking the system, but instead are seeking entry, and want to be incorporated into it. There is a growing emphasis on "expressive", rather than "instrumental" politics in India.

Margaret Cormack seems to suggest that the basic problem in India is "rapid social change"; suggesting that time would alleviate the indiscipline and intellectual inferiority problems. She says that Indian planners have planned too much (everything for everybody), that Indian citizens have demanded too much (welfare with prosperity) and that interested foreigners and observers and professionals have expected too much (instant improvement) considering

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10For a further discussion see Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, Little Brown Series, 1970. He discusses the activities of factions, and opposition groups. We shall apply his thesis to the student movement in India.

11Margaret Cormack, "Indian Higher Education in the 1960's: Hope in the midst of despair" in Altbach, op. cit., p. 250.
the psycho-social realities of forced development. We are beginning to realise that the Western model of development is not suited to India particularly because India is facing too many problems, social, political, and economic, simultaneously. Besides, the time span for development compared to the West has shrunk tremendously. We shall discuss the issue in subsequent pages. Modernisation, as I shall explain later, should be viewed as a "process-oriented", rather than "goal-oriented", phenomenon.

What then are the implications of the student movement for the process of modernisation that is going on in India. Are their activities taking the country backward, or do they mean to contribute to the modernising process? From an analysis of student activism along the lines suggested above three perspectives seem to emerge:

1. That the students, as the "incipient-elite", consciously engage in activities that lead towards modernisation in the educational, social, and political spheres.
2. That students unconsciously engage in certain activities that accelerate the process of modernisation.
3. That one can interpret the student movement as instrumental in bringing about constructive changes.

We shall apply all these perspectives to reconcile the empirical data into some kind of meaningful discussion.

The problems faced by Indian Universities are those
which could be expected of any university in a nascent democracy. They arise from the discrepancy between democratic ideals and what is possible within limited economic resources. They stem from the relationships of the university to the state and of the students to the authorities.

The structure of the university in relation to the state is too political. The result is that students and faculty members are dragged into the state political arena. The ruling party is allowed room to manipulate university policy, and opposition parties are afforded the opportunity to involve students in political disputes with the party in power. In order to put pressure on the government, or intimidate a particular faction, the student groups are a powerful weapon.

The conflict in the relationship of the students to the administrators arises from the relationship between two characteristics of most developing democracies, scarce economic resources and particularistic demands on the part of interest groups. The government's concern is for long term economic planning and the formation of capital; it feels that limits must be placed on the extent to which it will satisfy the demands of the emerging elites. But as Gabriel Almond puts it, "nothing can be more destructive of democratic culture than a conception of national interest which deprives special interests of the opportunity to bargain ---- (and) to
enter creatively into the flow of demands and politics of the political process". In democratic India many persons have availed themselves of the opportunity to organise and press demands upon the government. The result has been that:

The Indian government and bureaucratic elites overwhelmed by the problems of economic development and the scarcity of resources available to them inevitably acquire a technocratic and anti-political frame of mind. Particularistic demands of whatever Kind are denied legitimacy. As a consequence, interest groups either become captives of the government and bureaucracy and lose much of their followings or are alienated from the political system.

Education.

Under the Constitution of India, Education is mostly managed by the State Governments. The Union Government is responsible for the maintenance of the Central Universities, and institutions of national importance, for the promotion of research and coordination, and determination of standards in higher education and research. Cultural activities in relation to foreign countries also fall within its purview.

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12 In his Foreword to Myron Weiner's, Politics of Scarcity, op. cit.

13 Ibid.
Under Art 351 of the Constitution the Union Government is responsible for developing and promoting Hindi language along with Sanskrit and other Indian languages.

The Government of India is also responsible for education in Union Territories. In the case of territories which have their own legislatures, some of the powers are enjoyed by the respective Governments. The obligations of the Union Government are discharged by the Ministry of Education through its various programmes, activities, pilot projects and research conducted on the one hand by the Ministry of Education and on the other hand through the agency of different bodies like the University Grants Commission, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and Training, Central Hindi Directorate, Indian Council of Cultural Relations, and other similar organisations financed and administered by the Union Government.

There are also a number of advisory bodies like the Central Advisory Board of Education, All India Council for Technical Education, National Council for Women's Education which assist the Ministry of Education in working out its programme and policies.

14 Andaman and Nicobar, Chandigarh, Dadra, and Nager Haveli, Delhi, Goa, Daman and Diu, Himachal Pradesh, Laccadive, Mimcoy, and Amindivi Islands, Manipur, Nefa, Pondicherry and Tripura.
Though education is a state subject, the central government and the state government work together in the formulation implementation and evaluation of the various programmes. Social and economic planning which includes educational planning is a concurrent responsibility.

The authority of the government in controlling the system of public instruction is in part shared with and in part delegated to University and State boards of Secondary and Intermediate Education as regards Secondary education, and to local bodies as regards elementary education in some States. The control over higher-education is exercised by the U.G.C. (University Grants Commission). A statutory body originally set up in 1953 by the Union Government following the recommendation of the Radhakrishnan Commission on University Education.

The Education Commission

The Education Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1964 to survey the entire field of educational development and to make a comprehensive review of the country's educational planning at the State and Centre.
Fourth Five Year Plan

The approach to Education during the fourth five year plan is three fold; (1) to remove the present deficiencies in the system, and link it more effectively with the increasing demands of social and economic development; (2) to remove internal stresses and strains in the educational system which have developed in consequence of rapid expansion in the first three plans; and (3) to extend the system in response to social urges and economic needs. A sum of Rs 823 crores has been allocated for educational development in the Fourth Plan.

Definition of Basic Concepts

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to deal with a problem of semantics which plagues the discussion of the phenomenon of "student activism" in Indian Universities and Colleges.

1. "Indiscipline", "Discontent", and "Unrest". Indiscipline will be used to refer to certain techniques used by students such as destruction of public property, and the forcible detention of University officials. Discontent and Unrest will be used as descriptive terms to denote the

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atmosphere existing in most student communities in India. Strikes, demonstrations, boycott of classes, are some of the techniques of indiscipline, and will also be used as modes of giving vent to students' discontent, depending on the goal they have in view.

2. "Student-Movement": Using Lipset's explanation, "student movement" is not a fraternity or social club, an academic society, or an extra-curricular, cultural group. He defines it as an association of students inspired by the aims set forth in a specific ideological doctrine usually, although not exclusively, political in nature. A student movement is a combination of emotional response, and intellectual convictions.16

3. "Alienation" and "Anomie": They are both socio-psychological concepts embodying hypotheses about specific relationship between social conditions, and individual psychological states. We would use "alienation", to signify social conditions, which limit initiative and deprive individuals of communications among themselves, to a situation in which the individual experiences himself as an alien. It is a condition where men are socially determined and constrained, when they must conform to social rules which are independent of their

wills, and are conditioned to think and act within the confines of specialised roles.

Anomic is used to denote a situation of infinite aspiration and unregulated emotion. Religion, governmental power over the economy, and occupational groups begin to lose their moral force. Indian culture is changing and, like any society success goals are emphasised, but are separated from an equal emphasis upon institutionalised procedures for seeking these goals. Anomic situations result in disequilibrium in society, as every one is not in a position to attain the societal goals.

4. "Tradition/Modernity": "Tradition is the way things have always been done. Modernity does not mean negation of all traditional customs and values, but involves rejecting inherited roles and making new ones. In other words, modernity means a "Rationalisation of ends".

5. Sanskritisation and Westernisation. One of the universal changes that occur in all countries as agriculture gives way to industry is the system of stratification. In a changing India, stratification is not so much on the basis of caste as on the basis of education and wealth. With a

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change from a vertical to a horizontal society, attitudes also changes. Sanskritisation, as Srinivas explains, is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology and way of life in the direction of a high and frequently "twice-born" caste. Sanskritisation is generally accompanied by social mobility, and the mobile group is able to assume new and prestigious roles. Rajni Kothari goes a step further and says electoral process is a way of social mobility too.

One of the consequences for the resulting social mobility is that education which was earlier the privilege of the elite (the Brahman) is becoming available to a wider section of society. Then modes of obedience and loyalty functional to a vertical, hierachical society are not acceptable to those moving in a competitive and horizontal society, and so it is more likely that the youth should be able to make manifest their contempt and total rejection of a world they never made. Freedom of thought instilled by education is meaningless if freedom of action is not provided. This process of upward social mobility is a direct consequence of the process of Westernisation. The process of Westernisation has

18 M. N. Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, Chapter I.

also brought about a change of values. A most important value which may in turn be subsumed by all other values is characterised as humanitarianism, by which is meant an active concern for the welfare of all human beings irrespective of caste, economic position, religion, age and sex. Egalitarianism and secularization are also included in humanitarianism, values increasingly turning popular with students.

**Methodology**

This study is not the product of an impersonal analyst, but emerges substantially from my previous role as a participant observer. Unless we are able to think the thoughts and feel the feelings of the people whose lives are involved in these facts, and yet remain detached, a valuable study can not be made. We shall try to be as objective as possible. For this, I have to cease feeling that I am an Indian and allow my other self, the unalienated student of the University of Massachusetts, to interpret the scene. Of course one can not be absolutely value-free. It is a truism that a paradigm in which one operates shapes the theoretical explanations and predictions one makes. Any study has to proceed on certain a priori assumptions which limit the range of possible variation of the social phenomena, and by doing this explanatory theories secrete normative judgements
about the form of a good society.

My theoretical approach, however, regards conflict as an essential ingredient of social existence. A theoretical approach that regards conflict as abnormal or that invests equilibrium with a special value can be a handicap in studying developing societies. But that is precisely what has happened under functionalism. Social analysts have borrowed their primary concepts from Parsons and Durkheim, rather than Pareto and Marx. Consequently they are greatly prejudiced in favor of societies which show symptoms of "functional-integration", "social-solidarity", "cultural-uniformity", "structural equilibrium", and so on.

I have also avoided the possibility of making my approach too rigid, and thus of pushing the argument to any one extreme. The study proceeds from micro-level studies of specific cases as have been reported to have occurred in Orrissa, Madras, West-Bengal, Delhi, which yield insights into the movement, to a more macro-level study of the movement in general, which helps generating certain perspectives.

The major hypothesized relationships which will provide a guide to the proposed problems are as follows:

1. The attitudes of the students paradoxically are a consequence of the output of modernisation. The very process of modernisation has made obvious the discrepancy between the fulfillment of socially induced economic and educational
expectations and the available means of attainment, the greater the potential discontent within a segment of collectivity. The emergence of this discontent produces a degree of in-group homogeneity in terms of attitudes, values and potential commitment.

2. Coercive controls and situational factors help to promote or hinder the development of a sense of "communality", and helps in actualising the diffused sense of relative deprivation in the form of rebellion.

3. Widespread student activity is a proof that "interest articulation" functions are not going on properly.

4. Student activity in India need not always be characterised as "indiscipline"; they have significant implications in terms of social, political, and economic modernisation of the country.

The study of student-activism thus becomes relevant to the field of political science.

Direction of Chapters

In Chapter One, incidents of student agitational activity will be described and analysed. The nature of the demands and the way they are presented, and the response of the authorities shall figure in this chapter. Chapter Two will deal with politics and Indian universities. A socio-
psychological interpretation of the data will also be attempted in this chapter. Chapter Three will emphasise the problems of a modernising society and the role of students in that process. In Chapter Four we shall question whether student activism in India could be considered a social movement. In the concluding chapter, after a summary of the major issues, certain suggestions for strengthening of the movement will be made.
CHAPTER I
THE UNQUIET CAMPUSES

Introduction

India is one of the countries that has had a long history of student revolt. As mentioned earlier it had its beginnings in the political protest demonstrations, which were organised during the fight for independence. Now over twenty years after political freedom and the establishment of a relatively stable government, the student protest has become a phenomenon very difficult to control. It has been incensed by agitations which result in violence including the destruction of school and public property. At times these revolts have been so well organised that educational and governmental authorities have been forced to give in to the demands of students. The present wave of student indiscipline began in North India after Independence and spread gradually to all parts of the country.

We can safely assume that Indian students have run into certain frustrations, disappointments, and restlessness in the past years. Many Indians are deeply concerned with this problem. It is discussed constantly in speeches, journals, newspapers, and books. Clashes over bus fares are a common occurrence, especially in cities like Calcutta and Delhi. Demands for student rates on trams are
most common. Incidents of stone throwing at buses and clashes between students and transport workers have caused colleges to be closed in West Bengal, Delhi, Kerala almost every year. The Indian newspaper reports of 1971 seem to indicate that in Delhi students almost daily fought with the transport workers.

The newspaper reports of the year 1966 cover funny incidents of students setting cinema houses on fire or stoning them. In Dhanbad (Bihar) some students got into trouble with the management because they were not allowed to occupy ladies' seats in a cinema hall. Students in Meerut were reported to have stoned a cinema house, demanding a lowering of cinema prices. Similar incidents have occurred in Punjab in 1972.

On occasions examinations are reported to have become a nightmare for every one in Indian Universities. At Gorakhpur in 1970 an examinee is reported to have tethered an Alsatian dog under his desk to drive off timorous invigilators. An invigilator in Manipur district (Uttar Pradesh) was killed because students were not allowed to cheat (i.e., copy from books containing answers to typical examination questions). Some students are reported to carry knives in examination halls.

Students in many colleges from time to time have
protested against the Kutch Tribunal Award.\textsuperscript{1} Maharashtra and the South have had comparatively little unrest except for the language agitations of 1964 in Madras, and the demands for a separate Telengana state in Andhra Pradesh. Even though Kerala has a strong Communist movement and a large student population it has seen little unrest. At Osmania University the students in 1966 demanded a judicial enquiry into the charges of communalism and favouritism in favouritism in University appointments. Engineering students of Punjab University walked out of a Convocation address given by Mr. V. V. Giri, the President in January 1968, saying they wanted jobs, not speeches.

Student unrest in India is not a massive problem, but it is nevertheless one deserving of serious attention.

\textsuperscript{1} India and Pakistan reached agreement June 29, 1965, on a cease fire in the Rann of Cutch. The accord ended sporadic fighting on the border that had started April 9. The Rann of Kutch Pact was signed June 30, and went into effect July 1. Agreement had been reached through mediation talks conducted separately with both side by Britain. Major provisions of the Pact: (a) India and Pakistan were to withdraw their troops from the Rann one week after the cease fire; (b) ministers of both nations were to meet within one month to delineate the border; (c) if the ministers failed to reach agreement in two months the dispute was to be submitted to a 3-member tribunal (excluding Indians or Pakistanis). India and Pakistan were to select one member each and the third who was to be chairman was to be chosen jointly. If both nations could not agree on the chairman, he was to be picked by the U.N. Secretary General U. Thant. The Indians considered the Rann agreement dishonorable.
Sometime it is exploited by a faction of teachers or outside political parties. It is an annual phenomenon, which gains momentum in the second or third month of the academic year and usually ends by the middle of the session. From the point of view of student leaders the success of an agitation is not measured solely by whether or not college and university authorities accede to student demands. They feel student unrest raises the students to a higher level of thought and action. Agitation itself, by evoking mass participation and by arousing the social, political and economic consciousness of students, is thought to be useful even if a given strike or agitation does not achieve its stated objective.

In post independent India, however, there is no larger political movement of which the students regard their own unrest as a part. Very often political parties have capitalised on the prevailing discontent in the student body and have used the student force to project their own dissatisfaction with the administration. Student leaders are often willing to avail themselves of the financial and material benefits offered by political parties.

Student strikes are an ideal issue over which opposition parties can embarrass the government, which controls the educational budget and passes laws regulating education. It is thus responsible for deciding the fee structure in all government colleges. Even the private colleges are subservient
to its decisions as they are recipients of large amounts of aid from the state governments, and also the University Grants Commission. The Chief Minister and the Education Minister are the spokesmen of the government. The opposition parties show their understanding for the students by trying to give them financial support, by expressions of sympathy in the press, through heated debates in the Legislative Assembly and by going on hunger strikes. Student association with political leaders strengthens their prospects of entering politics. The university campus acts as a recruiting ground for future politicians.

The leadership of most student organizations resembles any formal association in that it is compared of a few very active students and a large number of relatively passive members. The central core is made up of enthusiastic, political minded students who use the platform to demonstrate their potential leadership qualities. This helps them prepare for a political career.

The University Grants Commission was constituted in 1953, and given an autonomous statutory status by an Act of Parliament in 1956. It is responsible for the promotion and coordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations and research in universities. It also appropriates grants to different universities. The U.G.C. is in a position to play an extremely powerful role in protecting the universities against unenlightened interference by the government, though it does not exercise its protective authority, as it is responsible to the Parliament, and so would like to play it safe.
Student strikes on most campuses in India bring forth a variety of demands made on governmental authorities, university authorities, or non-university authorities. The administrative apparatus of India universities is such that any major change in educational policy, or university administration, directly or indirectly, involves the consent of the state government. A classification of incidents according to the nature of demands, as Myron Weiner has done, would not give us a clear insight into student unrest in India. Student protests cannot be dichotomized into political, educational and moral protests. The movement is usually backed by a conglomeration of causes. Demands made on university authorities have certain political implications, and, as we shall see later, students will not stake their academic interests solely on being associated with political movements. A chronological listing of strikes is also meaningless, especially when the present study is focused not on one campus but considers many campuses in North and South India. Categorizing incidents according to whether or not violence is involved is equally unsatisfactory, as it will not help to answer some of the more important questions about student unrest and its implications for the Indian

society at large. We shall instead take up certain major issues, and see how the different campuses have reacted to them. We shall try and find out what agitates the Indian student community, and what kind of issues are that have concerned them. After examining the reactions of students on various campuses towards these issues, we may be able to arrive at certain valuable deductions about the factors underlying them, and their implications for the future of India.

In the present chapter then, we shall study student unrest on various campuses in regard to some of the following major issues:

(a) Revision in educational policy, fee revisions, admissions, appointment of vice-chancellors.
(b) The Language issue.
(c) The Naxalite issue
(d) Corruption and mal-administration in the government and the university, and the demand for a separate state.

We shall examine these issues separately, which should yield an insight into the psychology of student unrest, the political nature of the movement, the aspirational level of students, and the seriousness or lack of seriousness with which the students commit themselves to the movement. However, not all the incidents have been explained
at great length. Information relevant to the analysis alone has been quoted.

**Major Issues of Unrest**

(a) Revision in educational policy, fee revisions, admissions, and appointment of vice-chancellors.

The increase of admissions into colleges and universities is often greatest in those fields in which the cost of education is lowest, and in which unfortunately opportunities for employment after earning a degree are at a minimum. Investment per pupil in professional, especially technical programs, is high but the expansion of arts and law programs involves a relatively small per-capita expense. Many colleges and universities carefully restrict entrance into technical and professional programs but freely admit students into arts or law schools. As a result of this lax, the admission policy, students inadequately prepared for college level work, resent having to take examinations. But since examinations cannot be wisked away, students unprepared for them will often vent their resentment by going on a strike.

In August 1965 the students of Hyderabad went on a strike, demanding that those failing in as many as three or four courses be promoted to the next level and allowed
to continue their studies.\textsuperscript{4} A year earlier the university of Hyderabad had decided that students failing in one or at the most two courses of the first year B. A. would pass on to the second year but provision was made for them to appear in the failed examinations a year later. Students were not satisfied with this arrangement. They complained that the classes had started late, and that many first year students were unaccustomed to the English medium instruction. Demonstration by students took a violent turn resulting in clashes between the students and the police.

The Chief Minister ordered the police to be sent to the Osmania campus to maintain law and order. There were several lathi charges and many injuries. After a week of agitation a compromise was reached and the authorities agreed to permit those failing in as many as three or four subjects to go on to the next level on the condition that they re-appear in the failed examinations the following year.

In Rajasthan, students demanded that English be made an optional subject in the degree classes and wanted General Education as a subject to be scrapped.\textsuperscript{5} When the


\textsuperscript{5} Overseas Hindustan Times, Sept. 9, 1967, p. 3.
authorities did not respond favourably students went on a strike. The first ten days were very violent. Students from the male colleges (Maharaja and Rajasthan) led a procession to the women's colleges (Kanodia and Maharani) and threatened to destroy college property if the principals did not close the institutions. They assembled before the Vice-Chancellors office on the third day of the strike, and were teargased.\(^6\) A lot of university property was destroyed, and some students were injured in a clash with the police. As the law and order situation deteriorated, the Vice-Chancellor decided to close down the university indefinitely, and the university hostels and the Maharani and Maharaja hostels were evacuated. The strike escalated to Jodhpur and Udaipur Universities (in the same state) too.

The Vice-Chancellors of Rajasthan, Jodhpur and Udaipur Universities then worked out a compromise formula and decided that English may not be compulsory for undergraduates in the second and third year degree courses, but should be continued in the pre-university and the first year of the degree courses. The student demands for a reduction of the minimum marks required for a pass from 45\(^\circ\) to 33\(^\circ\) was also

\(^6\) The author was a witness to the strike. Preparation for the strike by student leaders took place long before it had really started. Pamphlets were prepared and meetings were held by some of the more active students.
In 1971 the students in Rajasthan demanded that the LLB degree be treated at par with post graduate degrees.\(^7\) The university authorities rejected the demand in view of a resolution of the Academic Council that LLB was not a post graduate degree. When the 23rd. convocation of the University was being held the students wanted the LLB degrees to be awarded along with post-graduate degrees at the convocation. But this was ruled out by the Vice-Chancellor P. L. Bhatnagar. The students then seized the rostrum erected for the occasion, exploded crackers and pulled down huge pandals.

The Banaras Hindu University (B.H.U.), even though the best and biggest campus in the country has encountered many violent strikes. In Dr. Shrimali's (Vice-Chancellor of B.H.U.) own words the B.H.U. had become the only university in India where stabbings, rowdyism and the use of staves and lethal weapons had become the order of the day.\(^9\) On December 6 and 7, 1968, numerous cases of arson and loot- ing were reported and major efforts were made by the lawless elements to bring the students out of the classrooms on a


\(^8\) *Overseas Hindustan Times*, Sept. 25, 1971, p. 3.

\(^9\) Ibid.
call of general strike to get the orders against some student agitators rescinded. On the morning of December 8 the police went into action swiftly and mercilessly beginning with the Radha Krishnan Hostel. For this they did not receive permission either from the university authorities or hostel wardens. Hundreds of students were beaten up, many in the act of shaving or in bed in a number of Institute of Technology (I.T.) hostels. The telephone calls purporting to emanate from the district Magistrate and the Senior Superintendent of Police Banaras, began being received in the hostels, asking them to clear out before the police dealt with them still more severely. Soon the hostels all over the campus began emptying out, though the university authorities kept the classes open for the two following days. By December 11 the campus student population had thinned to less than 20 percent.

Several teachers had sympathised with the student resistance movement but were upset at this outcome. Both the district and the university authorities, and a large body of teachers agreed that arson and looting were the work of determined and trained men, mostly outsiders. It was reported that 200 of them moved about in small batches.

On December 6 the first day of the trouble, the

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10 Overseas Hindustan Times, Jan. 4, 1969, p. 4.
vanguard of a small student procession had attacked the central office of the University, and set fire to a postal van, a teachers training college bus and made attempts to set on fire the university post-office. The district authorities claimed to have taken leaflets from the person of those arrested, showing plans to disrupt the university in four phases. Of these the first three ending in arson and looting and already taken place. The fourth phase which had not taken place was large scale murder.

The district authorities claimed also that if they had not acted in the manner they did on December 8, when the police raided the I.T. hostels, a number of students would have been put to death. The atmosphere was steeped with violence. According to them, there was a fight between two groups of students in one of the hostels, in the morning of December 8, when the police entered it. One student, Mr. Laila Singh belonging to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.), was thrown out by the extremists from the third floor of the hostel. Another, Mr. Jaipal Singh, also of the R.S.S. had deep stab wounds on his body.

The police raided the Broacha hostel in the evening of December 7 at the instance of one of the wardens, Mr. Randhir Singh, whose family, according to the district authorities was threatened with being burst alive. A student mob alleged had marched to his living quarters. Mr. Singh was
reported to be very close to the vice-chancellor, Mr. Joshi. Of the 163 arrests made during the day only 84 were students of the university; 49 were outside students and 30 non-students. Many of the non-students could very well have been Naxalites according to district authorities.

Curiously, the universities authorities and teachers complained also that the police had arrived at the scene of arson and looting too late, creating a sense of insecurity among the students. The university authorities and others in the district believed what happened on campus had political overtones. The Samyukta Socialist Party (S.S.P.) and the extreme leftists, some of them perhaps Naxalites, were thought to have resorted to these terroristic methods to get the university closed, and to get a trained and energetic cadre of workers for the mid-term polls. According to one estimate, at least 1,000 students could be got for election work in the eastern districts and elsewhere in Utter Pradesh.

In mid-September 1971, the Banaras Hindu University and the Sanskrit University were again closed indefinitely following a threat by an M.A. final student to immolate himself within 24 hours if the student demands for the promotion of all failed students of the Institute of Technology and re-admission of all the expelled students were not conceded.

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
The students union jumped at the opportunity and called for a general-strike. Teachers were assaulted, peace-loving students intimidated, and classrooms forcibly locked up. Some students began hunger strike and others planned to go on fast for indefinite periods. The houses of deans and teachers were raided by mobs of demonstrating students. The university was closed down for the third time in eighteen months, owing to student trouble. Dr. Shrimali said he was determined to root out lawlessness by what he called a "small but militant minority of irresponsible students". He decried the demands of students, some of whom had even wanted those who had failed more than once to be declared as passed. He pointed out that steps aimed at benefiting a majority of the student community did not suit a small section of student union leaders who were out to hamper studies.

This minority had not only indulged in an unbecoming and unseemly behaviour, but had also resorted to filthy and abusive language. They had misbehaved with the V. C. and had assaulted professors.  

Hostel Wardens had been compelled to write resignation letters as the students wanted to drive them out and occupy their suites in the hostels. The vice-chancellor and other teachers seemed to have felt that it was sheer rowdyism.
by which a few miscreants, i.e., the office-bearers of student unions, were holding the whole student community to ransom.

There was no intellectual unrest; no passion for new knowledge. In fact it was the nature of the unrest, particularly the intellectual barrenness of student leaders that was causing concern. 14

The authorities in B.H.U. realised that unless firm measures were taken student hooliganism could not be ended. The Academic Council of the University endorsed the Vice-Chancellor's decision and said the University should be re-opened only when it was felt that academic life could not be disrupted again.

Violence on the Banaras Hindu University campus thus seems to burst out at the slightest provocation. The university autonomy is reduced to mockery. Only one vice-chancellor has been able to complete his full term in this seat of learning recent years. Such universally respected men as Dr. Radha Krishnan, Acharya Narendra Dev, Prof. Amar Nath Jha and Dr. C. P. Rama Swamy Aiyer, tried their hands at being vice-chancellors but all of them gave up prematurely with a deep sense of disillusionment.

Only one vice-chancellor stayed the full course. He was Mr. Bhagwati a retired judge of the Supreme Court. The Mudaliar Commission appointed to study the ills of the

14 Ibid.
university served as an eye opener. It spotlighted among other things the malaise in the higher reaches of the University. Most of its vital recommendations remained unimplemented. One which concerned the removal of certain teachers went through, but the teachers returned under a decision of the Supreme Court. All this has left its strains on the functioning of the university.

There are on the university's rolls about 10,000 students and one thousand teachers.\(^{15}\) They provide the nursery from where the political parties draw their cadre of workers. Elections of student bodies is therefore crucial. The various parties try to capture the unions through their youth wings. This is probably a feature of almost all universities in the country, but political consciousness among students seems to be greater at Banaras than anywhere else. The reason is that B.H.U. has been the centre of the nationalist movement from its very inception in British days and the tradition persists.

Banaras is the home of the S.S.P.\(^{16}\) leader Raj

\(^{15}\) Overseas Hindustan Times, Jan. 18, 1969, p. 4.

\(^{16}\) Samyukta Socialist Party, The Praja Socialist Party and The Socialist Party led by late Ram Manohai Lohia were merged into one and formed the Samyukta Socialist Party on June 7, 1964. A few months later, some of the P.S.P. members withdrew to revive the P.S.P. again. The party aims to achieve by peaceful and democratic means a socialist society free from social, political, and economic exploitation of man by man.
Narain, Member of Parliament (M.P.), an exponent of perpetual agitation, and his colleague, former U.P. Labour Minister, Prabhu Narain Singh. It is also the home of Mr. Satya Narain Singh, M.P. and Mr. Rustam Satin is firmly entrenched here. So also is the militant wing of the Jan-Sangh, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (R.S.S.). In fact the founder of the university, the late Pandit Madan Moahan Malviya, had a soft corner for the R.S.S. to which he gave a building on the campus, which is now a bone of contention among the warring student groups.

All these parties are strongly represented on the university bodies in their policy-making bodies. Any act of indiscipline, or even crime committed on the campus by any one belonging to this party or that, is sought to be condoned by their respective protagonists. Unseemly wrangles are held for this purpose. Only the Congress has a weak base on the campus. But it controls the central government from where the university derives its sustenance and administrative strength.

In 1968, D. Mazumdar, the S.S.P.-backed candidate, was elected president of the B.H.U. Student Union. He had acquired popularity in July 1966 when he led the agitation for supplementary examinations. When Dr. Triguna Sen arrived as Vice-Chancellor in October 1966, he followed a policy of appeasement and for a time there was peace on
campus. Mr. Mazumdar was readmitted to the university after the standing committee of the Academic Council had refused him admission. Not only this, he was admitted to the Institute of Metalurgy, a very special favour denied to others. Mr. Mazumdar also became President of the class IV employees union of the university, a body of about 1,800 persons. How a student engaged in studies was allowed to combine these two wholly unrelated offices is more than one can understand. Mr. Mazumdar continues to be the favorite of Dr. Sen and stays with him at Delhi whenever he goes there.

The 1968 academic session of the university saw the emergence of a new student movement to resist the attempts of trouble makers to disrupt its normal functioning. It came into head-on collision with them in the union elections when its leader Damodar Singh was defeated in the presidential contest by Mr. N. P. Sinha, the Communist Party and Samyukia Socialist (CPI-SSP) backed candidate, by 1,967 votes to 2,400. Since then the campus has assumed the aspect of a battle ground where the attempt of one side has been to get the university often closed and of the other to keep it open.

Another riot took place in mid-January 1971, when

Class IV employees, are the "blue-collar" workers, belonging to the lowest echelon of society.
an ordinance was promulgated on the recommendation of the recommendation of the then Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), Charan Singh, to make the membership of unions optional.¹⁸ This the authorities thought would reduce the force of the student unions as an agitational group. The then Samyukha Viahayak Dal government of which the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (B.K.D.) constituent was not too willing to rescind it. A demonstrating crowd of students burnt police vehicles and attempted to burn a police station. The police opened fire at the crowd. Eleven young men and an eight year old died and 102 persons were injured. Curfew was imposed, and army men patrolled the streets. Half a dozen universities and most schools and colleges in U.P. closed down to guard against the trouble spreading.

The political parties hurled dark hints at each other, for the sympathy of the university was essential for them, with the general elections scheduled by the end of the year. The present non-Congress (N) government in the state and its performance had additional importance, as U.P. sends by far the largest contingent to the Parliament. Mr. Kamalapathi Tripathi, chief of the new congress unit in the state, was forthright in his denunciation of the police

atrocities. The Home Minister Mr. Virendera Verma asserted that the attacks by police were pre-planned by some political elements, as intelligence sources gave no warning of the possibility of any such attack.

An important student strike began in Mysore state on December 12, 1963 and lasted until January 17, 1964. This was the longest, the best organized and the most peaceful strike that the students had ever carried out; it was completely successful in that the students finally achieved their aim of bringing about uniformity in fee structure. The strike was so successful that it did much to convince both the students and the public that students were capable of handling their own affairs.

The strike was occasioned by the fact that Mysore University had raised its tuition fees by about Rs. 54 beginning July 1963. The government colleges in Coorg, South Kanara, and Bellary, although affiliated with the University of Mysore had already been charging higher fees in comparison to other college. The university decision sought to bring about uniformity in fee structure throughout the State.\(^\text{19}\)

The number of full and half tuition scholarships was also reduced, in spite of the assurances given to the

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\(^{19}\) Ross, Student Unrest in India, McGill Queens University Press, Montreal, 1969, p. 53.
students in 1962 that they would be increased, and that the fee scale would be reconsidered. The failure of the government to live up to its promises was one of the main reasons that the strike continued until the government had announced a re-instatement of the old fee scale on January 17. Since the government had earlier gone back on its word, the strike leaders now would not trust its assurances that student demands would be given most sympathetic consideration if the strike were called off.

The precipitating factors of this strike then were the rise in tuition fees, the reduction in fee concessions to students, and the leaders' lack of faith in the government. The students demanded the reduction of tuition fees to the level existing in 1960-61, and stipulated that the percentage of scholarships should remain the same 30 percent for men students, 50 percent for women students.

Tension over these issues had been rising for some years and the student body was thus prepared for action. Seven of the fifteen members of the Central Student Action Committee that was formed on December 11 were law students. The issues of the strike did not affect them personally as they were all well off to be unconcerned about a rise in fees. None of the leaders received freehips or scholarships so the reduction in these benefits did not affect them. Thus their interest in the strike did not arise from any
thought of financial gain. Some of them were concerned about the hardships that a rise in fees would cause many students. But it is not likely that even the socially conscious leaders would have given up so much of their time and energy if they, like the Central Action Committee, did not enjoy the excitement and satisfaction of leadership. Most of them hoped that the publicity they received would at least help them to get elected to an executive position in a student union or bring them to the attention of one of the political parties. For the latter have their eyes on student leaders, as the college is an excellent training place for future politicians.

The leaders refused to allow any outside interest to capitalize on the student agitation. Several political parties tried indirectly to benefit from these situations by offering publicly sympathy and support, but the leaders refused to accept money from them, or even allow their members to speak at the public meetings.

During the thirty seven days of tension there were no incidents of violence. Some leaders did not approve of using undignified methods, such as shouting defamatory slogans about members of government, but did so for they knew such slogans were useful for rousing the students for action and maintaining their enthusiasm. The local press was cooperative in assisting the students to keep the issue in
front of the public. The publicity they gave the strike was one of the main incentives in moving students to participate in hunger strikes, for the names of those fasting were recorded and photographs of the participants were published. On December 22, the students started a hunger strike and some girls also joined in.

Telegrams were sent to Prime Minister Nehru, the Chief Minister and other ministers of state to tell them of the student demands. Leaflets were distributed to parents, urging them to write to the Chief Minister, to ask him to reduce the fees to the old level.

On January 11, three men students began a fast unto death. On January 13, 590 student volunteers controlled the "Mysore City Bandh". This took the form of a mammoth procession and a completely successful city-wide hartal.20 Not only did the commercial houses close, but tongas and taxis stayed off the roads, city buses stopped. On the same day there was a mass meeting of workers in support of the students. On this occasion, the Mysore branch of the All Indian Trade Union Congress criticized the government and expressed support for the students. Various other citizens and members of Parliament also publicly supported and

20 "Hartal" is a Hindi equivalent for boycott of goods and transport facilities offered by the government.
On January 2, the government acceded to the student's demand in regard to freeships and scholarships. This would raise the amount of money paid by the government and other sources from Rs. 17 lakhs to Rs. 27 lakhs. It would mean that out of the 45,000 students in the university 17,241 would get freeships and another 6,263 would obtain scholarships. On January 17, the Chief Minister decided to accede to all the student's demands. He said that this would cost the State Exchequer some Rs. 30 lakhs more.

Members of the various opposition political parties were also very active in promoting the students' cause in different ways. The Kannada Communist and Swatantra parties were particularly eager to identify with students. On December 25 and 27, appeals to the government to grant the students' request were sent to the Chief Minister. On January 2 in the Town Hall, the different political parties organised a joint meeting which passed a resolution of sympathy and support for the students. The Mysore Pradesh Youth Congress, the Bangalore Bar Association, the Basavangudi Welfare Association and the Akhila Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad were all organisations mentioned in the press as having supported the students.

The local newspapers gave the strike a great deal of publicity, and even the international press carried articles on it.
The Delhi University Students Union (D.U.S.U.) submitted a memorandum on January 23, 1969 demanding the re-instatement of a teacher of a college in Shahdara and the representation of students and teachers in governing bodies of colleges; introduction of correspondence courses in M.A. classes, affiliation of all college unions to the D.U.S.U., exemption from paying entertainment taxes for cinemas and other cultural shows, special transportation facilities for non-campus colleges, a well equipped library for non-residential colleges and a review of the system of fines and expelling students. The Shyamlal College lecturer was dismissed a year earlier when he allegedly disobeyed certain instructions of the principal. On January 16, more than 400 lecturers of the university and about 100 students went in a procession to the Vice-Chancellor's office while the Academic Council was in session to demand the re-instatement of the lecturer. The D.U.S.U. issued a call for a strike on February 3 as the authorities did not respond to their demands. A rift, however, developed in the Delhi University Students Union on the eve of the general strike. A powerful section of the Student Union led by its secretary suggested that the strike should be deferred. Representatives of eight colleges were opposed to a strike.

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at this time, as the vice-chancellor, these students said, had advised the governing body of Shyamlal College to reconsider the dismissal of the lecturer and a committee was studying other demands of the students.

The militant groups decided to go ahead with the strike decision. The strike was however a flop. The mass rally was attended by only a 100 people. The total number of college students in Delhi is 60,000. There was normal attendance in all university departments and most colleges.

The authorities and the majority of students described the poor response as a defeat for outside political elements who had inspired the strike decision for reasons best known to them. The police were happy, too, for there was no trouble except for a minor scuffle at Hindu College.

A section of the students openly alleged that some political parties wanted to provoke student trouble in Delhi so that it could spread to neighbouring states where mid-term elections were due to be held. The fate of the much publicised strike and rally was known on earlier when a large number of representatives from colleges had opposed the strike decision and decided to mobilise public opinion against it.

That the organisers were interested in a strike for the sake of a strike was evident from the failure of the union representatives to reply to the authorities offer
for settlement of various issues.

On the third morning, a score of "leaders" collected at the Union office and began their visits to various colleges, to persuade students to abstain from classes. They got a rebuff at the Ramjas and Hindu colleges. A minor scuffle occurred at Hindu College when the processionists tried to enter classes. Commerce college boys greeted them with "go back" slogans and the Hans Raj boys were prepared for what they described as a "showdown". The processionists did not visit that college.

The organisers had a tough time. At places they were literally thrown out. A group of anti-strike students went around colleges advising their friends not to join the strikers. Some non-strikers went to the extent of burning strike leaflets. The unusual reception discouraged the leaders from "covering" all colleges. They turned to the Vice-Chancellor's office and reached there about an hour after the scheduled time for the "mass" rally.

They carried placards and shouted slogans. They wanted the democratisation of the university. The leaflet explained that "Even though examinations were close, it had become inevitable to fight against the narrow concept of compulsory attendance, exploitation by capitalists, bungling and dictatorship through governing bodies, and for better relations between students and teachers".
The demonstrations dispersed after the leaders said that they were going to meet the Education Minister, Dr. Triguna Sen. The strike ended, when the Education Minister agreed to look into the demands of the students.

Innumerable incidents belonging to this category could be cited. However, for a clearer understanding of the situation, it should be wise to limit ourselves to a few incidents. This will enable us to discern the mind and the mood of students more easily. We have seen that their demands have not always been immature. This point shall be elaborated in the next chapter.

The following case study of Osmania University will show that the government may effectively become the policy making body of the university by altering the mode of selection of the Vice-Chancellor, by changing the composition of the Senate and the Syndicate, or simply by granting itself the right to issue directives to the university. The ensuing discussion is significant because students may become involved in a conflict over the appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor. A dispute of this kind precipitated the largest agitational activity in the university's history.

In 1957, Dr. D. S. Reddy was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Osmania University on a three-year contract.22

His second term expired on April 8, 1964, but even though he was already 65, he was again re-appointed to a five-year contract. Later in April 1966, the Andhra-Pradesh government passed the Osmania University Bill which changed the mode of appointment of the Vice-Chancellor. According to Section 13A of the Bill, he was henceforth to be directly appointed by the Chancellor, i.e., the Governor of the State. The Bill also gave the Chancellor the right to remove the Vice-Chancellor "on the ground of misbehaviour or incapacity". It reduced his tenure from five to three years. The composition of the Senate and Syndicate was altered so as to reduce the University's autonomy vis-a-vis the government.

Consequently the Chancellor of Osmania University, Mr. Patton Thanu Pillai appointed Dr. P. Narasimha Rao as Vice-Chancellor effective October 27, 1966.

Dr. Reddy introduced a petition on May 31, 1966 in the High Court contending that Section 13A had been introduced due to personal grudge or hostility that developed between the Chief Minister, Mr. K. Brahmananda Reddy, and himself with the sole object of getting rid of him. Dr. Reddy's petitions failed in the High Court, and he moved his case to the Supreme Court, which eventually upheld Dr. Reddy's appeal that personal animus was the motivating factor behind Section 13A as it had been amended in April 1966. Thus, the Andhra government would, in the end, fail to replace Dr. Reddy.
But, in the meantime, on October 27, 1966, Dr. P. Satya Narayna, President of Osmania University Teachers Association (O.U.T.A.) announced that lecturers would abstain from work to express indignation at the appointment of a new vice-chancellor in complete disregard of the students wishes who were on the side of Dr. Reddy. Even before the appointment of the new vice-chancellor Dr. Narayana had warned that any appointee, however eminent he might be, would not enjoy the respect of the university staff because of the circumstances in which the appointment was made. He deplored "the manner in which the present Vice-Chancellor was sought to be replaced in utter disregard of the university autonomy and its democratic traditions".

The next day, the students also began to agitate. Crowds of students gathered in front of the Arts College building, which houses the administrative offices of the University and vowed not to let the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor enter the building after he had taken over his post. Students threw stones at taxis and buses as they passed the college. They cut telephone wires to hinder communications between the new Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar, Mr. L. B. Deshpande. They later abducted the Registrar to an unknown place outside Hyderabad to prevent him from taking orders from the new Vice-Chancellor.

As the protest continued, violence spread to the
cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. During the course of
the strike many buses were stoned and hundreds of street
lights smashed.

On October 31, at the Secunderabad railway sta-
tion, police used tear gas and lathi to disperse a mob of
5,000 students. All business activity in the twin cities
ground to a halt. For three days no buses or trains oper-
ated.

The students voiced their demands at a meeting of
the Osmania University Student Association on October 30,
two days after the agitation began. It was decided to strike
indefinitely on the basis of an eleven point charter of de-
mands. Some of the more interesting of the demands were the
following: (1) University autonomy must be preserved, (2)
Andhra-Pradesh must be awarded the fifth steel plant, (3)
food ration cards should be issued to city students, (4)
police must stay off the University campus unless requested
to enter, (5) Old regulation for B.Sc. and B.Com. and B.A.
examinations should be retained, (6) Evening college students
should be granted bus concessions, and (7) the third class
ratings should be abolished for post graduate students.

The students also called on the government to con-
vene immediately a "tripartite conference of government,
teachers, and student representatives for a thorough review
of the university legislation to ensure the autonomy of the
university". On November 3, a delegation of students met with the Chief Minister Brahanamananda Reddy, and formally presented their demands to him.

On November 6, the Chief Minister agreed to call a "meeting of the representatives of the students, teachers, Education Ministry, and eminent educators to discuss matters relating to the university in the light of the Kothari Commission report and also the question of giving representation to students on university panels". Thereupon the students ended their strike.

The Chief Minister is also reported to have said that bus concessions would be given to evening college students in Hyderabad and Secunderabad and that ration cards would be issued to district students living in the city.

One of the major concerns of the students was the seating of their representatives on the University's policy making bodies along with administrators, educators, and prominent citizens. Police moved in as quickly as possible to control the rioting. Several lathi charges and one police firing occurred, but less than five persons were seriously injured and fewer than twenty arrests made. On the university campus, however, the police were slower in acting because there was some question of who was empowered to call them on campus. Normally this is the Vice-Chancellors duty but in this case it was unclear who the Vice-Chancellor was.
Finally riot squads were sent to the campus by the Chief Minister with the approval of the student as well as the faculty organisations.

Students admitted that they had been financed by political figures outside the university. While it is difficult to get at the truth in an atmosphere charged with allegations and counter allegations, the impression persists in the public mind that somehow the split in the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (A.P.C.C.) had spilled over to the student movement.

(b) The Language Issue

India has always been a multi-lingual civilisation. The *Linguistic Survey of India*, published in 1927, spoke of 179 languages and 544 dialects (and in all 1,652 "mother tongues"), while the latest Census of India (1961) recorded speakers of 1,018 different languages. The Constitution of India recognised this when it listed 14 languages of India in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution according to the 1961 Census 87% of the population gave these 14 languages as their mother tongue.

The early impact of modernisation created a sharp dichotomy between the elite and the masses of India which was the result of western education and life style. The
later thrust of modernisation and the mass mobilisation phase of Gandhi's movement, strengthened regional identities. Local elites developed regional and literary political forms, communicated the ideology and techniques of the movement of mass mobilisation through regional media, and built bridges with the villages. The demand for linguistic autonomy and the replacement of English by Hindi and the regional languages kept spreading.

A member of Parliament representing Orrisa state once said in the course of a debate: "My first ambition is the glory of Mother India. I know it in my heart of hearts that I am an Indian first and an Indian last. But when you say you are a Bihari, I say I am an Oriya. When you say you are a Bengali, I say I am an Oriya. Otherwise I am an Indian."23

I would not be an exaggeration to say that Mrs. Gandhi owed her election as Prime Minister of India party to the politics of language. The British unified an aggregation of people who spoke diverse languages and had diverse political histories and had never been members of a single political entity.

Language as an immediate political issue stems

from the fact that during the colonial era English was the
language of the higher levels of administration, of communi-
cation between provinces, and the language of law courts
and higher education. With Independence these former Bri-
tish colonies have found it necessary to solve certain
issues centered around the language problem. What shall be
the official language or languages for the purpose of admi-
nistration, both at the level of Central government and in
the constituent regional units of the political system is a
question which has vital implications for participation of
the common man in the political process, for equality before
law and for employment. The question of language is also
directly related to education. What language or languages
should be used as the medium of instruction? On the one
hand, educational policy must square with decisions taken in
regard to the language of administration; on the other, if
it is to be serious and responsible, it must critically eva-
luate the adequacy of indigenous languages for transmitting
knowledge relevant to the 20th century, the availability of
personnel and facilities for instruction in the language
chosen, and the price a student will have to pay in being
taught in a language other than his mother tongue.

The conflicts revolving around language reveal
many conflicting aspects of Indian society, its relation to
its past, its sense of history, the assumptions on which its
social relations are based, its posture towards the period of European colonialism, the pattern of existing social inequalities and the means advocated for levelling them.

The important question is that of the all Indian media of communication, English could not be expected to continue as the nation's lingua-franca. The only other candidate was Hindi. The Constitution had stipulated that while Hindi be designated as the "official" language of the Union, English must continue to be used until 1965, after which the Parliament was to review its position.

The "Hindi-fanatics" had pushed their way in a style that alienated other language groups. The official Language Commission, and a Committee of Members of Parliament recommended that Hindi should progressively replace English as the official language, possibly with effective change over in 1965. This, however, aroused great anxiety in non-Hindi areas where agitations were mounted to register protests against the recommended course of action.

The pressure that ensued led to an immediate response from Nehru who gave a "pledge" to the non-Hindi areas that English would remain for an indefinite period as an

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24 In the resolution of the Congress Party at its annual session in Gauhati in 1958, in the Presidential Order of 1960, and in the Official Languages Act of 1963, to which all were added Nehru's personal "assurances".
associate "official-language". Nehru's personal guarantees proved effective in allaying southern fears, but he passed away in 1964. Routine administrative circulars on the "switch-over" to Hindi continued to irritate the southerners, and Prime-Minister Shastri on January 26, 1965, declared that the time for switching had come. He did so without adequate preparation of a ground work for national consensus. The result was a precipitous crisis. The unprecedented act of self immolation by two D.M.K. leaders in Madras city, violent outbreaks in large parts of Madras state, the formation of a highly organised Student's Agitation Council, and a dramatic resignation of two Madras ministers. Such a cumulative and massive pressure finally led to a policy change, which while still obscure on a few points committed the country to a specific language formula. The outcome was the "three language formula". Every state was to have freedom to transact its own business in the state language, which was also to be the medium of instruction in the state universities; English was to continue as the language of inter-state communications (if these were written in Hindi they would have to be accompanied by an official English translation). Non-Hindi states were to continue to correspond with the Centre in English. English was to continue as the official language at the Centre, including the Parliament. Official examinations were to be conducted in English,
Hindi, and all the regional languages; and there was to be a phased program for the development of Hindi. No section was fully satisfied with this compromise formula. It, however, became the basis for a slow process of consensus.

Regional differences so vital to Indian life have been mirrored in student-activism on the language issue. In 1965, rioting in South India against the imposition of Hindi as India's national language was sparked off by students. The anti-Hindi agitations in which more than fifty persons were killed and much damage was done caused a national crisis and forced the Central government to postpone the implementation of its language policies. A Student's Action Committee from colleges throughout the Tamil speaking areas co-ordinated strikes which often became violent.

The opposition political groups, particularly the anti-Hindi D.M.K. party, strongly supported the students, and there was co-ordination between student leaders and opposition politicians. The south Indian agitation came as a surprise for students in that part of India had no history of political activism.

The language issues is one of the Key political questions in South India. The students combined the anti-Hindi agitation with local campus issues. They worked towards retaining English as the medium of instruction in higher education, and in the All India Competitive examinations.
It was this student power which had brought the D.M.K.\textsuperscript{25} into power in 1967 because of their common opposition to Hindi. On the political side the fundamental issue is not so much a question of language as one of relative power between the North and the South or more specifically between Uttar Pradesh and Madras State.

The anti-Hindi agitation again took a serious turn in 1967 in Madras. Student agitators smashed Hindi name boards in different parts of the city.\textsuperscript{26} They had been shouting slogans denouncing Hindi-Imperialism. They erased all Hindi words from platforms of the railway stations. They also marched into cinema houses exhibiting Hindi films and demanded the removal of Hindi posters. The theatre owners complied with the demand. The effigies of the Union Finance Minister, Mr. Moraji Desai and Mr. Bhabutri Misra, Bihar Congress leader and M.P. were burnt by students at Coimbatore.

In Madurai students of almost all colleges protested against the Language Bill\textsuperscript{27} about 1,000 students of

\textsuperscript{25} D.M.K. is a party of South India, consisting mainly of non-Brahmins, who are against the domination of North India and the dominance of the Brahmins.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Hindustan Standard}, Dec. 23, 1967.

\textsuperscript{27} Language Bill of January 26, 1965, and the subsequent three language formula discussed earlier.
Jamal Mohammed College at Tiruchy boycotted their classes.

The student power which had swept the D.M.K. to power in 1967 with its militant backing to, "English ever Hindi never" was up in arms against "Tamil ever Hindi never". The D.M.K. obviously mistook the students opposition to Hindi as their love for Tamil.²⁸ The Chief Minister Mr. Karunanidhi was provoked by outside elements to discuss the possibility of enforcing Tamil as a medium of institution. He warned that the private sector would be forced in another ten or fifteen years to employ Tamil graduates.²⁹ This sparked off a strike by students resulting in a clash between the students and a police.

The Congress (O) and the Swatantra have come out in support of the bi-lingual formula with the S.S.P. also favoring it. The D.M.K. ally the Congress went a step further in advocating a three language formula.

The main issue worrying the students is that with employment opportunities in the state being limited, could they possibly secure jobs without an adequate knowledge of English or Hindi. Ministerial assurances that Tamil graduates would get priorities in state government. Jobs has


²⁹ Ibid.
failed to convince them. Statistics have established that the government cannot offer employment to more than a small percentage of college graduates.

The language issue had assumed serious proportions in most of the universities in the North too. Of course the student demands were slightly different. They wanted English as a subject scrapped from the curriculum, and were against the three language formula to the extent that they showed no tolerance to the idea of allowing English continue even for sometime to come, unlike the students in the South. They wanted the change over to Hindi as a medium of instruction, to take place immediately. In their denunciation of English, the students in the North were particularly supported by the Jan-Sangh party.  

The language issue, helped crystallize the main issues by an open confrontation between opposing groups, and the nation has survived the crisis. Students in this connection indicate that Hindi has been spreading fast as a second language in non-Hindi areas through education, trade and mass media. The situation is not very different than it always was in India: a special language for the

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30 The Jan-Sangh was started by late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951. It has stronghold in several states. Its aim is to contribute to the advancement, strength, and glory of Hindu culture and to achieve Hindu Raj by constitutional means.
elite (English), a lay language spoken fairly widely in the land but with many regional variations (Hindi), and regional standard languages dominating and bringing together the more numerous sub-regional and local dialects. The main difference is that the regional standards are becoming important all-state vehicles, and the gap between these standards and the local dialect is fast narrowing.

(c) The Naxalite Issue.

More recently the events in India provide still another dimension to the student role, particularly in West Bengal. The activities of the leftist parties are causing a grave situation in India. The Naxalites, a faction of C.P.I. (M.L.) have recruited a large number of volunteers from the Calcutta Presidency College which was full of Communist Party cadres. The Naxalites identify four enemies of the Indian people: U.S. imperialism, Soviet neo-revisionism, the feudal landlords and their big political mouthpiece - the Indian National Congress. They blame these elements for keeping Indian society semi-feudal in character, obstructing progress, and perpetuating the exploitation of the people. Their aim is to liberate the rural areas through revolutionary armed agrarian revolution and then encircle and liberate the cities. Marxist-Leninist-Maoist literature and leaflets have been widely distributed.
Monodeep, a Naxalite student in an interview with Dom Moraes an Indian journalist, claimed, "I see no future for India, a feudal and colonial country except in violent revolution. We are already active in many places and by 1974 shall spread throughout the country. Everyone in the college is our sympathiser." 31 Sen, another Naxalite student, said: "I am a Naxalite. Nobody with political conscience could do anything else. I graduated from Calcutta University ten years ago. Do you know there are 65,000 unemployed engineering graduates in India? There are four times more studying in colleges." 32

Similarly C.P.I. (M.L.) propogated Maoism among students. The Communist Party is stated to have set up a five member committee to organise and supervise infiltration and propogation of Maoist ideology among students. Naxalite literature is said to be available in Delhi University campus. Even in Punjab, Naxalite underground organisations work, and many teachers and students secretly work for it. However, the Naxalite have established themselves most strongly in four West Bengal Universities: Calcutta, Todypur, Kalyani, and Siliguri in North Bengal. They are also

31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
active in Kerala and Andhra-Pradesh.

A few illustrations will further indicate the mood of the Naxalite students. On August 19, 1970, Calcutta College suspended classes for a week when a few students tried to force the teachers of the chemistry department to hand over the keys of the laboratory, where explosive chemicals were stored. On September 17, some Naxalite students took out books from shops on Gandhi, and made a bonfire out of them, on the streets of Calcutta. They raised slogans like "Mao-Zindabad", and "Gandhi Murdabad". They also collected other journals they could get hold of and set them on fire.\(^{33}\) Dr. Sen the Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University was ruthlessly murdered by young Naxalites in the university premises. A 1970 survey showed the incidents of violence on the increase, and the Central Government faces a serious problem of law and order. In the summer of 1967 and 1968, a group of radical students had disappeared from the campus scene of various universities. These students genuinely believed that demolition of the existing social structure with all its class distinctions was the only salvation for the people.\(^{34}\) They had gone to attend a Naxalite

\(^{33}\) The Statesman, September 17, August 19, 1970.

\(^{34}\) The Statesman, "Naxalites Disillusioned with Opium", February 26, 1972, p. 10.
orientation camp for budding extremists organised by the West Bengal co-ordination committee of Communist Revolutionaries to draw up a program for a revolutionary student and youth movement at the camp. They believed that Naxalism was the answer for the oppressed masses against tyranny and exploitation.

Recent reports in newspapers, however, say that students have returned to normal and feel that what they regarded as a panacea was nothing but a new and more potent opium for the masses. Life in West Bengal is particularly returning to normal.35

(d) Corruption and Mal-Administration in the Government and the University, and the Demand for a Separate State.

In this section our discussion of student unrest will relate to matters concerning the administration, both in the government and the university. One of the examples we are going to deal with is the strike in Orrisa in October 1964 which lasted for about two months. On September 26, the leaders of the unrest initially started of to demand an enquiry into police excesses during a student strike in response to the Central Investigation Bureau's reports on charges of corruption involving the present and previous

35 Ibid.
Chief Minister Mr. Biren Mitra, and his predecessor Mr. Biju Patnaik. They wanted along with their initial demand an investigation into the charges levelled against these politicians. On October 27, students demonstrated outside Mr. Mitra's house. They were teargased by the police. About one hundred and eight six were arrested that day. The next day a crowd of students attempted to mob a police station and threw stones. A crowd set fire to a building belonging to the Education Minister, Mr. Satya Priya Mohanty, and the adjacent house of the Finance Secretary Mr. H. S. Ghosh. Another crowd stoned the residence of Mr. B. Patnaik, former Chief Minister, and the official residence of the Home Minister. In the wake of the week long student agitation the Director of Public Instruction ordered the closure of all government colleges in Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Bolangir.

Since October 2 the students were mainly agitating for a judicial inquiry into the alleged police excesses on September 26 and the subsequent two days, withdrawal of the criminal cases against arrested students, and withdrawal of the government press note blaming the students for the incidents of loot and arson that had earlier occurred.

When the situation worsened the state government

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36 Statesman, October 28, 1964, p. 3.
advised the Brigadier Inderjict Singh Gill to send army personnel to control the situation. Curfew was imposed in Bhubaneshwar. Prohibitory orders under Section 144, Criminal Penal Code were issued in several districts in Orrisa.

The student movement is reported to have been actively supported by the Samyukta Socialist Party, and later was joined by the Communists who also demanded a judicial enquiry into police excesses. Looting, arson, and wanton destruction of property continued unabatedly. There were many unseen hands behind the agitation in the initial stages, some of them were those of dissident Congressmen.

The police opened fire when the use of tear gas proved ineffective. With the increasingly active support of the opposition parties and some dissident Congressmen, the movement took on a political complexion and erupted into a militant campaign against the ministry in general, and Mr. Mitra, and Mr. B. Patnaik in particular. With the Government's prestige seriously damaged and the images of Mr. Mitra, and Mr. Patnaik destroyed by allegations of corruption and the subsequent inquiry by the Congress lawyers' panel and the Central Investigation Bureau people in large numbers joined the movement.37

37 Statesman, October 30, 1964, p. 3.
Telengana: A Separate State.

Andhra Pradesh after the reorganisation of states on linguistic bases in 1958 encompasses the extremely backward Telengana and Hyderabad region and the very prosperous delta regions giving rise to the inevitable charge of "discrimination", and deliberate deprivation of the former. The people in the Telengana region felt they were economically and socially deprived of their legitimate rights. They were not adequately represented in state and local bodies. This issue had been agitating the people of Telengana for a while.

On January 15, 1969, students of thirty two colleges of Andhra burnt effigies of nine Telengana Ministers and demonstrated in city streets to protest against the Government's failure to implement the safeguards for Telengana.38

While the Jan-Sangh dominated faction39 in the students' union stated that their struggle was for a separate


39 A militant wing of the Jan-Sangh which functioned autonomously of the party, capitalised on the parochial sentiments of the students.
state of Telengana, their rivals declared that they were only for full implementation of Telengana safeguard. The two groups shouted slogans and counter slogans at each other. Clashes between the two factors were averted at a public meeting following intervention of saner elements.

Originally the strike was due for the next day, January 16, but due to differences in the student union the date was advanced by a day. Most of colleges had an optional holiday on account of Sankranti. Students of various colleges took out processions carrying placards demanding implementation of Telengana safeguards. They converged on Nizam College grounds where effigies of Telengana Ministers were burned. Armed police platoons accompanied each procession. The pro-Jan-Sangh faction formed a separate students' action council to press its demand for a separate state. Leaders of the C.P.I. (M), the Jan-Sangh, the S.S.P. and the Majlis lent their support to the students' agitation for Telengana safeguards but warned them against any demand for separate statehood.

Meanwhile, the agitation for full implementation of Telengana safeguards continued elsewhere. Students remained on strike in Hyderabad, Warangal, Khamman, Nalgonda and other places in Telengana.

The agitation spread to the non-student population of the Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh to ensure speedy
development of their backward area and became a major headache for the State Government following the students' decision to plunge into the fray.

Students of the Osmania University and some other institutions in the Telengana region had been active taking out processions, burning effigies of the Chief Minister, Mr. Brahmananda Reddy, stoning trains and undertaking hunger strikes.

As the days proceeded, the agitation intensified with police bursting tear gas shells and making lathi charges inside college compounds in order to break up riotous students. Students and policemen were injured day after day in the clashes between the two parties.

The students demanding a separate state were the more violent. When tear gas failed to control them, police were forced to make lathi-charges.

On the other hand, the rival faction of students demanding the implementation of Telengana safeguards, continued its relay fast in protest against the all party accord which, in their opinion had not ensured proper implementation of safeguards.

That faction of the Osmania University student union which wanted safeguards for Telengana called off its nine day agitation after satisfactory talks with the Chief Minister. And with it ended the fasts by a rally of students.
But the "separate statehood for Telengana" faction resolved to continue its agitation until its demand was conceded. Students continued to boycott classes and hold demonstrations.

Sporadic incidents such as this continued on through the next eight months with people constantly being injured, property being destroyed, and students abstaining from classes. In the middle of September, 1969, the Telengana Students' Action Committee, decided to appeal to the students to return to classes immediately. Dr. Chenna Reddy, Chairman of the Telengana Praja Samiti, acted as its spokesman requesting that the students go back to the classes immediately and "still continue their associations with the agitation". He explained that students could associate with the agitation for a separate state in different forms and, if necessary, they could come out of the classes as and when required.

In the opinion of the action committee of the Samiti, the future role of the student community was of paramount importance since they had already "created history" by their continuous abstention for more than eight months for a cause they had held dear.40

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40 The Times of India, "Telengana students urged to go back to classes", September 23, 1969, p. 1.
Mr. Mallikarjun, general secretary of the Osmania University Students' Union and chairman of the Telengana Students Action Committee felt that the Central Government had failed to provide even a transitory solution to protect the academic career of the students. He urged students to attend classes immediately but also to devote one day a week for any program which might be decided later and to be ready to follow any call given to them by the Telengana Students' Action Committee keeping in their mind the matyrs of the movement.

Students returned to classes on September 23, 1969, in significant numbers. But there was still much protesting from those who did not go along with the Telengana Praja Samiti and the Students' Action Committee's appeal to return to classes immediately.

As time went by, the main device of the students for a separate Telengana state was relay fasts. One again, the government failed to produce tangible results for nothing had been decided regarding Telengana safeguards by the New Year.

This is only one of the examples. Students in other states have also from time to time organised themselves to demand a separate state. In Assam for instance there were a series of student strikes in 1968. Similar was in the case in Punjab. Students have also fought for the merger of
Bengal and Bihar, and the merger of Bombay in Maharashtra.

**Conclusion**

The strikes on different campuses at different times, more often than not prove to be violent. Though much of the violence in the strikes, has nothing to do with the particular issues involved. In fact they represent a momentary outcry against social oppression, mingled with a desire for fun and adventure.

We have where possible, referred to the involvement of different political parties in the student unrest. As the newspapers report only the allegations and counter allegations of the different sides, it is difficult to get to the truth of the matter. While it is difficult to measure the extent of involvement, there is no doubt that politicians are involved in student unrest.

Usually there is a central issue over which the students turn restive, but in the confusion which emerges, they find an opportunity to air all their grievances. Their demands have stretched from scrapping the examination system, to ousting of Vice-Chancellors. The students feel that it is their right to influence the government and university authorities, on issues which effect them.
CHAPTER II
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

Introduction

In the previous chapter we dealt with the various kinds of student activism. The causes have been numerous and range from trivial issues like the size of concessions on cinema, bus, tram, or railway tickets, to more important ones, like the refusal of the university authorities to admit an unqualified person, the general admissions policy of the university; particular examination papers, college fees, the conduct of the police in dealing with demonstrations, demands for a separate state, and the like.

Universities in a sense are hierarchical organisations made up of three estates: administration, faculty, and students. From one side comes the demand that faculty should take part in the policy decisions of the university. From still another quarter comes the demand that students should participate in all decisions and policies concerning the university, and the claim that they should share power equally with the faculty and the administration. The student often finds the universities unresponsive to his needs and remote from his interests.

Students have in many universities been considered an unimportant and passive element within the "knowledge
factory". In many universities, the student is treated as an outsider whose chief virtue is obedience and submission to authority. Students have been required to accommodate themselves to rules and regulations. Those who have been difficult have been disciplined by suspension or expulsion.

Activities during the past years suggest that youth in India are being attracted to the ideals of participatory democracy. An excellent university should not be organised on corporate authoritarian lines, but rather should try to activate the creative potentials of both students and faculties. What is a better way to stimulate and arouse motivation for goals than by helping to participate in creating them.

Cases of student unrest dealt with in the previous chapter fall mainly under two headings: (a) grievances against educational authorities, and (b) grievances against governmental authorities, arising from a generalised dissatisfaction with the government's management of the economy, inadequacy of employment opportunities, and discontentment with specific government policies with regard to specific issues.

Student unrest began to gain momentum in the sixties, and especially in the mid-sixties, and lasted till the end of the decade. It has been observed that during the period 1965-68 only 36.3 percent of the cases of student
unrest emerged from student grievances against educational authorities.\(^1\) Of these 22.4 percent were related to the present examination system, 12.9 percent were related to hostel accommodation, and 7.1 percent were associated with tuition fees.

On the other hand, 63.7 percent of the cases of student unrest in the country were due to student grievances against public authorities. Evidently life among students is very much affected by happenings outside the campuses. In the present chapter we shall try to find out why the students behave in the manner they do.

The phenomenon of student unrest is the result of a variety of causes at various levels of society. The turbulence of the Indian student is not just the product of the tradition of civil disobedience movement, in which Indian students played such a great part in the nineteen twenties, thirties, and the forties. During the first ten years or so of India's independence, student activism was largely apolitical. The explanation could be found in the argument that the pre-independence eminence of the Congress Party and the charisma of Jawaharlal Nehru, were among the factors keeping the students in a relatively pacific disposition. But as the Congress hold over the Indian masses declined and

\(^1\) Overseas Hindustan Times, March 7, 1970, p. 6.
as opposition parties became more and more assertive, resort was made more and more to student political participation and support in the drive against the ruling party. The original Congress party had bifurcated into the Congress (New) led by Indira Gandhi, and the Congress (Old). The leftist parties like C. P. I. (M) became active particularly in West Bengal and Kerala as noted earlier. The rightist parties like the Jan-Sangh and Swatantra also came into the limelight.

In the 1967 elections the Congress had lost ground in many states. In Kerala, Madras, and Orrisa, it had to concede power to opposition parties. In five other states it had to form united front governments in coalition with other parties. Thus, more recently they have focussed their attention on schools and colleges and universities. Unemployed and frustrated, youth happily volunteer to work for these parties. In order to put pressure on the government or intimidate a particular faction, the student groups are a powerful weapon in the hands of local politicians. Opposition parties in India have sought to build student political movements both as a means of building public opposition to the government and recruiting support for themselves.

In the present chapter we shall examine student unrest from three perspectives: (a) student unrest and politics; (b) student unrest and education; (c) the socio-psycho
reality and student unrest. These categories help us analyse the socio-cultural and political factors that affected the lives of students and influenced their conduct.

**Student and Politics**

The government has been intruding more and more into the affairs of the university. In matters such as who shall teach whom, what, and how, the university has considerable amount of freedom. It could be true to say that the government does not interfere in matters which are essentially academic; it does everything else to control the administration of the university, which in the ultimate analysis disables the university in performing its true academic functions.

There are limitless possibilities for the government to harass a university. The custom of the state governor being also the university chancellor, which is the case in most universities is significant. In theory the university is an autonomous body, and the government is not answerable to the legislature for anything that a university does or fails to do. In practice the chancellor, who is also the governor of the state, functions only in consultation with the council of ministers. Thus the university in India belongs to an era of administration where the government could do what it wanted and yet not be answerable to
the legislature.

The appointments of the vice-chancellors, (the operating executive head of the university) is usually manipulated by the government. The appointment usually goes to the yes-men of the governor or the chief minister of a particular state. We dealt with the Osmania case in the previous chapter. The vice-chancellor becomes the representative of the government, and he in turn brings in his own people into the university as professors. Setting up a university is one way the politicians manage to make a lot of people feel important. The involvement of politicians in the appointment of vice-chancellors is also an excellent example of personality politics, a phenomenon which permeates all levels of Indian political and academic life.

The old vice-chancellor, and the new chief minister had personal problems at Osmania as seen in the previous chapter, and the latter was determined to have Dr. Reddy removed from office. In part, the split between the two reflects the split that had recently divided the state congress, a split which was also caused by personality problems between the chief minister and Sanjiva Reddy, former union minister and speaker of the Lok-Sabha.\(^2\) Of course in

\(^2\) The Chief Minister, Mr. Brahmananda Reddy belonged to the Congress (N) faction, the vice-chancellor was on the side of Sanjiva Reddy who was a Congress (O) man.
this instance the teachers and the students were on the side of the vice-chancellor and the strike was in his favour.

After independence, and especially after Nehru, the Congress leadership has been divided on how to deal with India's many social, political, and economic problems. The opposition parties have taken advantage of the chaos, and have utilised the student force to draw the attention of the public to the ills of the administration, and at other times for their own vested interests.

A point worth considering is that prior to 1947 political issues were clear and dramatic, the British had to be driven from the sub-continent and radical social change had to be instituted in Indian society. Following independence the issues were no longer so clear and limited. The confusion was worse confounded after the death of Nehru.

Some political scientists have felt that student unrest in India has been largely dominated by unconscious drives. Myron Weiner seems to suggest that:

In an environment in which peasants workers and middle classes are effectively organised and appropriate channels exist for effecting public policy within an established framework, the student organisations are likely to play a restricted role.3

This statement is not wholly true. Student unions are analogous to any interest group, and procure for the student community what the other interest groups achieve for their own. There is a scramble amongst political parties for a foothold in the universities, as it is from here that they wish to recruit future workers. Like the trade unions, student unions have also become politicized. At Banaras, for instance, rival political parties have infiltrated deep inside the campus and are engaged in a battle for supremacy. In fact the recent trouble at Banaras explained in the last chapter, arose over the defeat of a group owing allegiance to a certain political party in the election to the university union. In Allahabad, the Congress, Jan-Sangh, and the Samyukta Socialist Party operate through the youth Congress, Vidyarthi Parishad, and Samajwadi Yuvaajan Sabha respectively. All the time the political atmosphere in the country happens to be against restraint and sobriety, because many non-congress parties, after their failure to run heterogeneous coalitions, have been tempted to assert themselves in other areas. This is borne out by the fact that the dismissal of the united front government in West Bengal led to violent clashes, in which students took the leading part.

M. K. Dhar, "Parties and Student Unions, Overseas Hindustan Times, January 18, 1969, p. 5."
Then following the D.M.K. run Tamil-Nadu government's rejection of the centre's official language policy, the students created an unprecedented law and order situation. They started demonstrating and stopping trains in protest against the All-India-Radio's decision to give precedence to Hindi news bulletins over English ones.\(^5\) Election of student bodies is fierce. They provide the nursery from where the political parties draw their cadre of workers. The various parties are represented on the union through their youth wings.

The government is conscious of student "power", and is constantly trying to influence or perhaps repress some of its leaders. The fact that governments have to argue, and sometimes use force to quell student rebellion, is an indication of the potential power of the student. Are the Indian students then politicised in the conventional sense of the term? Why do students take part in politics, and what kind of students participate? It would seem first of all that the norms concerning student political activity are rather conservative in India, in that it is not quite legitimately accepted for students to be active in politics. One survey at Allahabad showed that only 27 percent of the students believed it was proper for students

\(^5\) Ibid.
to take part in political affairs. When we compare students with non-students, it appears that students exceed other youth more on hypothetical expressions of political commitment than on matters of real involvement. We could consider the following tables.  

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Preference</th>
<th>Students (56)</th>
<th>Non-Students (104)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>16 percent</td>
<td>33 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.P.I.</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.S.P.</td>
<td>2 percent</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-Sangh</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
<td>1 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Preference</td>
<td>68 percent</td>
<td>52 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparative support levels by student and non-student cohort with similar age and marital status composition: Madras, Cultuta, Delhi, 1961, I.I.P.O. (Indian Institute of Public Opinion)

Professor Alex Inkeles of Harvard University and Dr. Amar Kumar Singh of Ranchi University Collected survey data in 1963 in Bihar both for students and for young working men. Their results yielded the following:

Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Preference</th>
<th>Students (51)</th>
<th>Non-Students (639)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>37 percent</td>
<td>28 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.S.P.</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
<td>2 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.P.I.</td>
<td>4 percent</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swatantra</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
<td>1 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
<td>6 percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference</td>
<td>43 percent</td>
<td>57 percent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"In your view how much attention do the leaders of the country pay to the opinions of ordinary people like yourself?"

Table III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Non-Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Have you ever been so deeply concerned with and interested in some public issue that you really wanted to do something about it?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Students</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ibid., we shall use these survey data to get answers to some of our queries.
Who are the students who engage in anomic outbursts and other nonroutine forms of political action. An examination of survey data collected over a span of several years in Indian colleges and universities, will help us get answers to various questions like: Are the Indian students politicised in the conventional sense of the term than other youth of their age? What proportion of students are politically engaged? Is the proportion higher in India than in other countries? Who are the politicised students?

In the sample survey conducted by Professor Alex Inkeles and others, student overwhelmingly claimed that they were interested in politics, while non-students made no such assertions. Some 72 percent said that they were interested in politics as compared with 39 percent of the non-students. But the differentia between the two groups narrowed as one asked about concrete actions. While 59 percent of the students and only 32 percent of the non-students said they sometimes attended speeches, the actual participation in demonstration was lower. Only 15 percent of the students and 13 percent of the non-students claimed to have taken part in political demonstrations. The clue we get in this connection is that education heightens political consciousness only to the extent that theoretical commitment of students is greater than non-students, even though both seem to be fairly equally involved.  

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8 Ibid.
Student political movements have a way of diffusing from one campus to another through the process of imitation as seen in the previous chapter. So it becomes hard to discern whether the root causes are also similar, nor is it possible to compare the sources of political ideas of various student movements. Whenever an innovative style of protest arises in response to the unique situational stress of one college, it may be seized upon students in other regions.

Frequent mass demonstrations however always tend to mislead the public as to the strength of student backing behind a demonstration. The proportion of students who are actually active in politics is rather small, despite the dramatic shows they make of their feelings. The leaders can bring about an impressive demonstration by using even a tiny fraction of student population. A very unusual thing about India is that students who regularly support a party are few. Moreover the students who do take part in politics are not the most outstanding scholars, nor the most prominent for other social reasons. A survey was conducted by Metta Spencer of Indian students in May of 1968 in the vicinity of Boston, Mass. Their lack of political involvement was quite remarkable: only two of the respondents had voted.

9 See Philip Altbach, Student Revolution, op. cit., p. 126.
in the 1967 general elections in India (i.e. about 3 percent of the sample of 68 persons). Only 19 percent claimed to have voted in any local elections in India. When asked their preferences for parties for parliament, 20 percent said they had no preference. 23 percent had no preference for any party for the legislative assembly. Some 30 percent had taken part in student politics in their colleges in India.\(^\text{10}\)

Who then are the politically engaged students? Two decades ago the best answer would have been that they are the leftists. Today however the traditionalist parties and the rightist elements seem to have received as much support as the leftist groups. The Jan-Sangh has a strong student appeal, as does the D.M.K. in Madras. One 1952 survey illustrates the fact that most active students come from the lower socio-economic strata.\(^\text{11}\)

Table IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Group</th>
<th>Less than Rs.100/month</th>
<th>Rs.100-300/month</th>
<th>Rs.300-500/month</th>
<th>Over Rs.1000/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Participants</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) Ibid.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
Parents income and political participation scale in eleven Indian universities. (Bureau of Social Science Research and Lucknow Department of Psychology, 1952).

In still another way we have evidence that politics could be a substitute for effective social involvement in the university setting. More often than not political activism is linked with membership in voluntary organisations which is not always the case. The following table will bear this out.\(^\text{12}\)

Table V
Political Concern and Organisational Affiliation in Allahabad University (Dibona, 1963)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Orientation</th>
<th>Officer of Organisation (37)</th>
<th>Ordinary Member (92)</th>
<th>Non-Member of Any Organisation (236)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Concerned</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Likewise at Allahabad as well as in the eleven universities, the politically engaged students were most often the young men from the village, whose connections with the ongoing political system must surely have been established

\(^{12}\) Ibid.
lesser than the connections of city boys. We may be forced to conclude that the people who take most interest in politics are those who exercise the least actual influence in the political process, and also who would have the least social power because of their position in the stratification system. Despite the fact that anomic forms of political agitations are endemic, it would appear that student participation in more routine partisan activity is not particularly great. Students claim to be more politicised than do working people of their age, but actually there is no evidence that they are.

It would be fair to suggest that the response of the Indian student should not be interpreted as being opposite to the response of students in other countries. One has to find the appropriate political structure before drawing a comparison and in that sense the response of Indian student could not be said to be unique at all.

**Student Unrest and Education**

The most notable instances of student unrest in relation to campus oriented issues are those which concern examinations - that examinations be postponed, or that they be scrapped, that question papers were too tough. Other kinds of demands have concerned hostel facilities, that
hostels are poorly equipped, or that the fees charged are too high. Occasionally students have opposed the appointment of certain teachers, and the retention of certain others. The demands are to some extent genuine but in the first instance, their voice is quelled by physical force, and student activism thus transforms itself into indiscipline, and becomes a law and order issue.

The Kothari Commission's diagnosis of the

The Kothari Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1964, to study the situation of Indian universities. The Commission finally submitted its report in 1966. A 17 member committee headed by Prof. D. S. Kothari, carried on the task. The two very important objectives stressed by the Commission are the vocationalisation of education and work experience in all educational activities. It emphasised that education adjust itself to the changing needs, and that it must strike a balance between the spiritual, cultural, and scientific values of the emerging social order.

The Commission recommended a 12 year pattern instead of 11 at the higher secondary level. A longer duration was seen to provide more training to school children in community service projects without decreasing the content of the syllabus. It also laid greater emphasis on teaching science at the higher secondary level. It affirmed the desirability of student unions in all universities.

Educational Reconstruction

(1) To bring about major improvements in the effectiveness of primary education, (2) to introduce work experience as an integral element of general education, (3) to vocationalise secondary education, (4) to improve the quality of teachers at all levels and to provide teachers in sufficient strength, (5) to liquidate illiteracy, (6) to strengthen centres of advanced study and strive to attain in some of our universities at least higher international standards, (7) to lay special emphasis on the combination of teaching and research, (8) to pay attention to education and research in agriculture and allied sciences, (9) to make mother tongue as the medium of instruction at school and college level as knowledge can be assimilated quicker in one's mother tongue.
situation runs in terms of paucity of resources, lack of selectivity in appointments of lectures, and the admission of students almost a complete lack of vocationalisation of work experience and social service in the present educational system of the country. But these are harmless generalities and the crucial condition of spelling out the criteria for the achievement of excellence are hardly even attempted.

The paucity of resources about which complaints are so often heard is a paucity resulting not merely from the overall shortage of resources, but is in some measures an artificial paucity created by faulty planning on the part of the government and the educationists of the country.

The educational authorities and the government have not been able to provide the conditions under which the students can make the best possible use of their time and energies. Instead the blame is passed on from hand to hand among the university teachers, student guardians, and the government. There has to be progressive improvement through a well planned program.

13 (continued from the previous page)

Three Language Formula

Classes I-IV. The study of only one language should be compulsory at this stage. The second language may be either the official language of the union (Hindi) or the associate official language of the union (English), so long as it is thus recognised.

Classes VIII-X. The study of three languages should be obligatory at this stage and one of these three languages should be the official language of the union or the associate official language, whichever was not taken up in classes V-VIII.

Classes XI-XII. The study of no language should be compulsory.
Many of the students live in anxiety ridden poverty, unable to pay even the most modest charges for their hostels. Scholarships, even tuition waivers are scarce. When they think of the future they have no relief in prospect. India's economy cannot provide enough administrative and intellectual posts for the rapidly swelling body of degree holders. There is thus an imbalance between the educational outputs and the absorptive capacity of the economy.

The most important factor in the student unrest is the increasing unemployment. According to a widely acceptable estimate there are 20 million without jobs. In a statement before the Indian Parliament Mr. M. C. Chagla, then Education Minister, stated that the government had decided not to establish any new university during the fourth five year plan, and to consolidate and improve the standards of the existing 65 universities. It may be pointed out that the central government has failed to resist the pressure of state governments demanding to open new universities. In fact educational planning in the post-independence period has neither had a clear vision nor a definite direction and formed one of the weakest sectors in planning.

The admission of increasing number of students from the lower socio-economic strata has had its own effect.

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Students coming from these classes (villages, and lower castes) have no clear conception of the meaning of higher education. Overpopulated campuses, poor teachers, and lack of extracurricular activities contribute to the unrest.

With higher education becoming increasingly available to larger segments of the population the value of the bachelor's degree has diminished and the importance of a master's degree has also declined. Ironically enough the government is unwilling to restrict educational expansion even though it is unable to allocate sufficient funds to maintain educational standards. ¹⁵

The students confidence in institutions, which provide degrees but no jobs has been eroded. They thus make no efforts at studying when they could get through examinations by bribing teachers. In some universities degrees can even be bought at reasonable prices. ¹⁶

The poor employment prospects for university educated youth in India enlarge the reservoir of adolescent rebellion lack of seriousness on the part of students.


Students know that it is favouritism, kinship with people on the top of the hierarchy, or bribery, more than a degree, that will fetch them jobs.

The institutions of learning themselves are not very demanding. The greater the pressure placed on students to work hard to retain their positions in the university, or to obtain a good position after graduation, the less will they indulge in untoward incidents. Most of the state and community colleges are inferior, and feel that they must stabilise their conditions by attracting as many students as possible, if they are to survive. The quality of students is therefore poor.

The founding and maintenance of an institution of higher learning has become a status symbol among religious and linguistic communities. Groups able to afford the initial investment have founded colleges without regard to the future development of the institution. University authorities until recently have exercised little control over the expansion of institutions and confined themselves to stressing the maintenance of minimum standards of quality for the institution once it is established.

Efforts to raise standards in an atmosphere impregnated with traditions of student agitation itself arouses unrest. Knowledge needed is geared only to the examination, there is no discussion, no Socratic method, no inquiry, no
controversy and no creativity. Degrees are sought and not education and at some places degrees can be bought, as said earlier. The educational system offers no opportunity for informal association between faculty and students. Those few professors who would like to be friendly find the pressure of numbers and the suspicion of colleagues defeating.

The motivation behind Indian educational policy is not self efficiency, but self advertisement and propaganda. An informal development taking place in most Indian universities is the attempt by a section of teachers to build up influential contacts in the government and in the U.G.C. Thus develops a "managerial class" whose main concern is to run the show. Very often this has caused concern amongst students. To quote Chanchal Sarkar,

"If administrators and teachers in universities imagine that their petty intrigues for elective offices, their flattery of authority, their inability to stand against unfair practices, their lack of interest and competence in academic matters, their attempt to instigate students for private ends and their lapses of conduct go unnoticed by students then they are deceiving themselves."17

In the haste to make higher education available to an ever greater number, educational institutions have been burdened with more students than they have facilities. For, with the inevitable decline in standards not only in instruction but in such important matters for the development of a

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17 Chanchal Sarkar, The Unquiet Campus, p. 15. The book is a collection of the author's articles to the different Indian newspapers on the student unrest in India.
mental attitude of discipline, and personal contact between the teacher and taught and the provision of playing fields and other outlets of extracurricular activity.

The government has also treated vice-chancellors and other headships of educational institutions as sinecures for discarded politicians and civil servants not remotely qualified for the tasks to which they are called for or they bring in a man who is either their yes-man, or a representative of a major faction on the university campus. The man who heads the educational institution is either not qualified, or if he is qualified, he is not given enough latitude to carry on his work, as more often than not he has to face governmental interference.

Even the central government, and the vice-chancellors have agreed that students have certain legitimate grievances, regarding which measures should be taken, though the conflict escalates due to interference by politicians.

The output of the educational system has not been in keeping with the national economic and social needs. First among the educational outputs, there have been surpluses of certain kinds of skills and shortages of others. There has been a distinct overproduction in arts and commerce, and the unemployment rate among the graduates in these fields is on the increase. That is because educational enrollments have been more susceptible to social demands
than to the rationality of planning.

Another impediment to adjusting the university structurally and functionally has been the cleavages on the language issue. The Hindi speaking states do not want English as the medium, and as we saw in the preceding chapter there have been demands to scrap English as a subject altogether. The non-Hindi states do not want Hindi but their regional languages. Translations are not enough, original work is needed in those languages, and it requires a lot more time and ability to think in those languages than most of us can imagine.

The recommendations of the Kothari Commission on the language issue was not accepted very well. Some thought that the disintegration of India was very likely to be the result of the new policy by which 15 different languages will become the sole means of higher education in individual states. Others felt that regional languages including Hindi do not yet possess the advantages of English as a channel of contemporary knowledge. Even when they are developed the problem will arise of communication between not only the universities but the educated also in the different states. It would also prove an expensive venture.  


19 The Hindu, Madras, Aug. 12, 1967.
In our view the best solution would be to have two link languages, English and Hindi and to conduct the public service examinations in these two tongues, under the proviso that if students write their papers in one they should know the other also. If the Hindi states are willing to accept English as a compulsory second language in education and an associate official language in administration, the non-Hindi states should be ready to make Hindi compulsory (though the pass mark in the examinations may be low at first at the high school stage). In the university the students all over the country should be offered the option to study in English or the regional language, while the option in centrally run institutions should be English and Hindi. Languages should be bridges between the states of India as well as with the outside world and a solution of this kind will create two links instead of one.\(^{20}\)

Some top scientists of the country viewed the proposed switch over to regional media for all stages and all subjects of education as one that would spell disintegration and disunity in the country. All of them agreed to the need for one common medium of instruction at the university level throughout the country. They felt that the regional media should be confined to the school stage with adequate

preparation to switch over to a common medium at the university stage.\(^\text{21}\)

There was something inconsistent and paradoxical in the anti-English fury in North India. The agitators do not show the same aversion to the English clothing. The Indian journalist Nirad Choudhri thinks that to do away with English would be a severe blow to the unity of the country.\(^\text{22}\) For the Hindi speaking opponents of English their concept of India does not extend beyond the Hindi speaking areas. They are convinced that the Hindi people were backing Hindi not because it is an Indian language but because it is their mother tongue. "They are selfish in imposing their mother tongue on non-Hindi people and finance it from tax money collected compulsorily from non-Hindi people also."\(^\text{23}\)

To sum up a discussion of the role of education and university in producing unrest among students it would be worth quoting Chanchal Sarkar again. The university according to him is a place "where the demoralised rule the disgruntled".

\(^{21}\) The Indian Express, Bombay, July 24, 1967.


\(^{23}\) Hindustan Standard, Sept. 12, 1967.
Socio-Psycho Reality and Indiscipline

By now it should be no wonder that the student community in India finds itself bewildered seeing no hope in the future, and entertaining little respect for any body or anything. The students have become demoralised and lost all faith in the traditional norms and values of Indian society.

They see public life riddled with double standards of morality and behaviour. Political leaders exhort the public to a life of simplicity and poverty, but themselves live in uncommon luxury. There are others who harangue the people against foreign and western education, but will send their sons to the U.S. to be educated. Yet others plead for Hindi in everything, but send their children to Hindi medium schools. The Gujerati citizen who cannot tolerate his immediate Maharashtrian neighbour talks of world brotherhood, so is the case with their other counterparts. This distressing dichotomy between public utterance and private behaviour is contributing to the present rot. The students sense this, they feel alienated from the social fabric, but ironically enough when they leave the student world, and enter society, they follow others.

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The Indian youth knows that rewards await those who defy authority. They also know that ability and merit no longer are given due consideration and that communalism and provincialism decide many issues, from admissions to schools to appointment to jobs. A feeling of diffidence and frustration thus grips them. This causes unrest, and they await the slightest opportunity to explode.

The process of Westernisation has also created a situation of "anomic"; success goals are goals of material prosperity, college degree is a status symbol. Everyone in society clamours for a high position and prestige. The Indians especially the educated no longer cling to the laws of dharma and Karma, and religion is no more a palliative for the afflicted and the downtrodden. Social mobility is sought by everyone, but there are no institutionalised means to achieve their objectives.

Moreover, Indian students are generally free from familial responsibilities, no matter how poor their background may be. Parents provide for their educational and other expenses. Since they live in a carefree atmosphere, it is easier for them to indulge in "fun-play", of which

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According to the Hindu religion, "dharma" stands for duty according to the rules of religion, and "Karma" refers to the fact that one's station in life depends on his past deeds.
their indisciplinary activities is a part.

By now it should be fairly clear that the social structure in India is conducive to the development of student activism and indiscipline. Political interference, poor academic standards, low employment opportunities, a sense of alienation, frustration, anomie, a feeling of relative deprivation are all factors which propel the students into activities to rebel against the system. But due to lack of direction and guidance by elders, most of the time the students fritter away their energies in useless endeavours.

The phenomenon of student unrest, as some Indians think is due to the acts of omission and commission on the part of various components of our society at various levels. Parents in India by and large are ignorant of the role they are expected to play in bringing up their children, except in the traditional sense. And the teaching community in general is not adequately equipped for, or even conscious of the role it is expected to play in the training of future citizens of India. Our social leadership has neglected the task of teaching its young, the task of educating the parents, creating the necessary environment and encouraging the teaching community to evolve the right standards. And finally our political leadership has committed its worst folly in invading the academic field, regardless of its
competence to do so, intellectual or emotional.  

Trying to explain the cause of student unrest, H. V. Kamath said "from my own experience as a student some forty years ago, I can confidently assert that not politics but politicking and 'patrioteering', is the cause of student unrest in the country today, and only the enthronement of true ideals and values on their rightful pedestal is the ultimate cure."  

"Another important reason for the agitational climate in our academic life seems to be the sense of frustration that has developed among students in general. Education has expanded in terms of the number of institutions, but has undergone little qualitative change during the post-independence era. What assurances do these large number of pupils have about their calling in life? There has been no corelation whatever of the character of higher education to the employment potential under the planned development to which we are committed. Then there is no proper relationship between teachers and pupils. There is a tragic separation between staff and students in Indian universities."

26 Symposium, "Why This Student Unrest", The Illustrated Weekly of India, January 29, 1967.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.
Enquiry Commissions

The government did recognise the disturbing effect of student unrest on Indian life, and enquiries committees have been appointed from time to time to investigate student problems. The Banaras Hindu University committee found the university to be a hotbed of intrigue, nepotism, corruption, and crime. The Kothari Commission was appointed in 1964 to study the situation of Indian universities. Home Minister G. L. Nanda began a series of interviews in October 1966 with university officials, and received a delegation from the Delhi University Student Union, the Socialist Youth League, and the right communist controlled - All India Youth Federation. This delegation demanded that the government set up a permanent commission to inquire into student grievances, with one fourth of student representation on the commission.

The National Council of University Students of India held a meeting of student leaders from 15 universities in New Delhi in 1969. The participants blamed the authorities for showing indifference to student grievances and demanded a judicial inquiry into police conduct. A three day conference of vice chancellors was held that October and

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they called for an end to police invasions of university affairs, an elimination of political influences in academic appointments, and better educational facilities.30

Conclusion

Student strikes then seem to start on the slightest provocation. The political leadership usually makes them indulge in excesses. Even if the unrest starts off for academic reasons, it is unscrupulously exploited by political interests. It is true that Indian students function in a society of scarcity, but incorporating them into the social and political life of the nation by allowing them to bargain legitimately, especially in matters that have relevance to their lives, can go a long way in restoring confidence in them as adults in society.

The Indian students are then not just delinquents,

30 Overseas Hindustan Times, Oct. 20, 1966, p. 3. Student unrest in India was also discussed at high level meetings in New Delhi. The three day conference of Vice-Chancellors and top educationists had recommended that the entry of police into university campus should ordinarily be at the request of the educational authorities. Expressing deep concern over the prevalence of student unrest among students which had by now assumed serious proportions, leading to violence and loss of property the conference said that the genuine needs and difficulties of students must be looked into carefully and sympathetically. It called for the setting up of an effective machinery which was to meet periodically to redress the grievance of students.
irresponsible, and motivated entirely by fun. The social situation, is structurally conducive to giving rise to a mood of unrest amongst the students. The process of modernisation started off in most developing countries, has accelerated the hiatus between theory and practice. The transition from tradition to modernity has been too swift, with the result that the new generation is not able to define its role, and find an appropriate place in society.

In character with the government's approach to the entire conduct of the nation's affairs, the student community has been subjected to all manner of ill considered experiments - in the language formula in the medium of instruction, in the rewriting of text books, in the reordering of courses and so on.
CHAPTER III
THE CHALLENGE OF MODERNIZATION AND
STUDENT UNREST

Introduction

Student demonstrations in India have been described as "student indiscipline", in most speeches, articles and editorials. Students have been reproached for their behaviour and have been urged to be disciplined and responsible. The activism has its positive and negative sides though the positive side has been completely overlooked. Formally organised, student unrest helps to solidify the student culture, which is much needed at a time when the young are moving from the security of caste and family, (a result of the modernising process) to the independence and loneliness of modern society.

In order to understand student unrest, all areas of the student life must be explored. The student does not live in a vacuum but is influenced by the total environment in which he lives. It is interesting to note that many changes are taking place as India is passing from an agricultural to an industrial society. The past is receding but there are only vague and unformulated glimpses into the future. What are then some of the under surface changes and conditions that could explain the blend of national progress,
and personal insecurity.

In the present chapter we shall discuss the concept of modernisation, as it applied to the Indian society. From this we shall gauge the positive and negative aspects of modernisation, which in turn has a deep implication for the life of the student. We shall then go on to consider, whether student unrest in India can be considered as a social movement, and the positive and negative outputs of their activities. And then we shall attempt a comparison of student unrest in India with their Western counterparts.

Effects of Modernization in India

"Modernization" is a general term describing the process of rapid change in human affairs since the scientific revolution. All aspects of human activity, the intellectual, political, economic, social and psychological undergo transformation at the same time. Modernization is accompanied by the extension of literacy from a small proportion of the population in traditional societies to a practically universal ability to read and write. Relations

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between men and women also undergo a marked change. The gradual replacement of physical with mechanised labor and with clerical and intellectual work, reduces inequality between men and women. As a result of modern medicine there is a remarkable improvement in health, life expectancy has risen.

Then with urbanisation, there is a significant transformation of the family from the larger kinship units normally associated with agrarian life to the much smaller nuclear family consisting only of parents and younger children. Modernization also instils the spirit of individualism. Young people tend to imitate their peers rather than their parents. Traditional societies normally are static, closed, and quiescent. Individuals are normally involved in relations principally with the family, the local community, and the functional group to which they belong.

(a) Achievements

Indians transition from tradition to modernity can be graphically illustrated by a variety of quantitative measures these statistics will prove the point.²

Some Basic Statistics of India for the
Periods 1950-51 and 1968-69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>1950-51</th>
<th>1968-69</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Income (Million Rs)</td>
<td>96,500</td>
<td>168,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Capita Income (Rs)</td>
<td>270.00</td>
<td>319.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (Millions)</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodgrain Production (M. Ton)</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Students (Millions)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Beds (Thousands)</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors (Thousands)</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Literacy Rate (Percent)</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Birth Rate (Per Thousand)</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Death Rate (Per Thousand)</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1966 expectation of life at birth was 50 years.
This rapid review of the main differences between tradition and modernity stresses the elements of expansion
and amelioration, and may convey the idea that Indians have benefited greatly from this process. Yet it is well known that modernization has been accompanied by great disadvantages too. If one thinks of modernization as the integration or the re-integration of societies on the basis of new principles, one must also think of it as involving the disintegration of traditional societies. When significant and rapid changes are introduced, no two elements of a society adapt themselves at the same rate, and the disorder may become so complete that widespread violence breaks out, large numbers of people emigrate, and normal governments become impossible.

Modernisation, then must be thought of as a process that is simultaneously creative and destructive, providing new opportunities and prospects at a high price in human dislocation and suffering. Industrialisation and urbanisation have raised the general standard of living, but social dislocations of the industrial pattern mount too. Unemployment especially of the educated is severe, and apparently increasing. Security is precarious, and hence the family is still the chief institution of social security. Joint family is breaking up, and working women are often an economic necessity. Education has been democratised and is now a status symbol, so all children must be educated. Delinquency and crime are rising in the cities. The reason is familiar,
i.e., the vast impersonality of society, resulting in "anomie" or "alienation", in the sense of being alone and unrelated to others in an unhumane world. Mental illness is a natural consequence, and suicide is often the "solution".  

A revolution of expectation sweeps the land. People at all levels want material goods and comforts, education, better jobs, holidays, medical care. The traditional attitude of resignation to conditions, which in excess becomes apathy, is changing both to hope, and to attendant tensions and anxiety. Improvements can arise only from discontent, from tensions, and a conscious effort to change the course of apparent destiny. This change in expectations is resulting in some frustration and bitterness, but also in some creativity.

(b) **Caste and Family**

The Indian government has probably tried harder than the government of any other country to break down barriers between the different strata of its society in order to bring about more equality among its people. The main dilemma has been that in trying to reach a higher or more equal position, the government has inevitably

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strengthened some caste differences. The attempt to assist the lower castes by dividing all the communities into "Forward" and "Backward" communities has emphasised the divisions between them, and caste identification has tended to become the basis for political patronage. This has threatened the security of some of the castes who had formerly had greater advantages in the field of education, and so felt safe in their higher occupational positions. On the other hand it has given some of the former lower castes a feeling of greater security, particularly those which have been able to climb into safer positions in the governmental hierarchy. In no part of India can provincial politics be explained without referring to caste. Where the entire state machinery is geared to caste, it is not surprising that caste should play a powerful role among both teachers and students. 4 So one of the very important influences of modernisation is "Sanskritisation", or upward mobility of castes. Since caste influence is so strong that it has seeped down through other organisations, and is even reflected in the elections of the student-unions, it is small wonder that the division into Forward and Backward

4 Chanchal Sarkar, The Unquiet Campus, p. 12. For further information on the importance of caste see Selig Harrison, India the Most Dangerous Decade
communities has had the effect of producing insecurity and frustration in the communities that have little power.

Ross, has dealt in a very interesting manner with the decline of the Brahmins in Mysore, and the rise of the Lingayats and Vogalikas into social and political power. He claims that since the Brahmins do not have a great deal of political strength in Mysore, it has directly or indirectly affected their economic power and prestige. So that many Brahmins have moved down the occupational hierarchy from the higher administrative and educational positions. A number have been forced into such menial occupations, as domestic service, skinning cattle, and making leather goods, jobs which were formerly allocated to the lowest castes. The caste which has political power uses caste nepotism, to protect their seats in college or in the administration.

One of the fundamental changes that comes about with the dawn of urbanisation and industrialisation is a shift in the rights and duties of different family members.  

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6 Aileen D. Ross, The Hindu Family in Its Urban Setting, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961, p. 88. "The forces of industrialisation and urbanisation bring a gradual change in the expectations of responsibility. On the one hand they shrink to the immediate family of parents and children, but on the other hand they widen to the community".
The traditional joint family provided its members with a large enough group of people to make it a satisfactory recreational unit. Movement to the city and away from relatives, and the new separation of family members, will make young people increasingly dependent on their peers, who will be able to give the guidance and information for the transitional period that the family may not be able to provide. Friendship among men students are increasingly strong in India, for in many cases, when students move away from their family and caste traditions, they find little understanding at home for their own problems of transition.

Many parents want their children to have chances they were denied, want them to be in new occupations, want them to be different. It is a fundamental change from wanting sons to be like their fathers, and daughters to be like their mothers. It involves moving from adaptation to hereditary prescribed roles to finding and creating new roles. This aspect of progress is leading to tensions. The opportunities are greater, but some securities weaken. Parents who wanted their children to be different often decry their difference, for difference brings distance. It is education then that is the chief promise and the chief threat.
(c) Marriage and Religion

In the traditional Hindu society, early marriages were a common practice. With the growing importance of education in a modern society, boys tend to wait till they have a career, and girls are increasingly going in for higher studies. Earlier friendship and companionship between boys and girls or men and women were not considered part of a boy's need or experience. With the growing liberation of Indian women, and their equality with men in jobs, education, and other skills, there has developed an uncertainty of relationship between the sexes. Free mixing is still not a widely accepted norm. Dating, except in a few big cities, is not a common practice. Boys thus indulge in girl baiting. They are usually seen chasing girls on streets. This seems to be another important factor which determines the way in which students release their frustrations in some kind of indiscipline.

If religion, that has been a vital and integral part of a traditional culture, is suddenly challenged by rapid social changes that question its basic precepts, the younger generation may find that the moral values in which they have been brought up to believe are no longer an adequate guide to them.
(d) Leisure

Sarkar warns that the body and mind must be "adequately engaged" to prevent restlessness at the student age. The Indian student has a great deal of leisure time on his hands, for the educational system does not force him to work hard during the college year, and as the Indian economy does not provide part time jobs for young people, he has little to do during vacations. Students may not have enough pocket money to permit them to make use of commercial entertainment.

Most of the things that the students would like to do such as travelling and taking part in cultural and intellectual activities are far beyond their means. There are few organised activities for young people outside the colleges. Organised youth tours consisting of about 30 students with a chaperoning teacher are increasing, but again it is a question of money.

(e) Educational Explosion and Unemployment

Another effect of modernisation is that education becomes increasingly available to all. Inspite of the caution urged by many Indian educators, there has been an

7 Chanchal Sarkar, The Unquiet Campus, op. cit., p. 22.
enormous expansion in India's educational facilities at the college and university level since Independence.\textsuperscript{8} The decline of the caste system and the emergence of an open-class society, encourages vertical mobility, and so college degrees become increasingly important as gateways to careers, and more and more pressure is put on students by parents and teachers to work hard, and to get high grades, which most of them like to escape.

Some of the main problems that many Indian students face, in finding satisfactory careers, are the struggle to finance higher education burdensome, family financial responsibilities, the confusion about a choice of careers, the spectre of the "educated unemployed", the lack of influential relatives to help them get jobs, and the disadvantages of belonging to a group designated as a Forward Community. On the other hand, students who come from wealthy families, who can count on nepotism, have little trouble.

The key problem in India is not too slow, but too fast a rate of educational development. It is true that the literacy level is still low. Between 1951-61 enrollments nearly doubled for boys and trebled for girls. If this continues, by 1980, enrollments in secondary education

are likely to be 80% of the total population of the relevant age group while enrollments to higher (university) education are likely to be as high as 10% of the population.

Rajni Kothari\textsuperscript{9} feels that a very high proportion of educational resources are spent on the education of girls, which from the short term point of view is highly uneconomic, as far as fewer girls put their knowledge to use by taking up gainful employment.

Education if not accompanied by commensurate opportunities for fulfillment can prove to be the greatest source of disaffection and anomie for the political system. And to the extent that it prepares human beings for opportunities that are not easily forthcoming, it creates a climate of frustration and leads to a general demand for

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\textsuperscript{9} Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, p. 376. At the primary level the number of girls enrolled per 100 boys has increased from 12 in 1901 to 39 in 1950 to 55 in 1965. At the secondary level the corresponding figures are 4, 15, and 26. In higher education the growth is more phenomenal. Total enrollment of girls grew from a mere 264 in 1901 to 40,000 in 1950 to 240,000 in 1965. Thus a census of scientific and technical personnel in 1961 pointed out that unemployment in female scientists and technicians is much greater (31 percent) than in males (8.7 percent). The imbalance is likely to be even more pronounced in humanities and social sciences where the tendency is to treat a degree as a necessary qualification for marriage rather than a career.
change. 10

Not only has the importance of education as a critical input in social and economic development increased manyfold in modern times, it also seems to have become a dynamic transformer of motivations, like styles, and aspirations. A major agent of socialisation it also tends to uproot men from their traditional moorings.

Education and the exposure to mass-media and other artifacts of modernisation are everywhere acting as powerful forces against the cohesion of traditional structures, and that the "realism" of the youth can also mean that it is not prepared to be fed on daydreams and looks for concrete results in jobs and rising income.

India had 60,000 unemployed engineers (Sept. 1969) and is expected by manpower experts in the country to go up

10 Hindustan Standard, Oct. 7, 1967, p. 3. Almost one tenth of the estimated ten million unemployed in the country comprises those educated from matriculate to the post graduate level. Estimates collected from registrations at employment exchanges throughout the country show that there are 619,480 matriculates, who are in search of jobs. Undergraduates seeking employment number a little over 200,000. Of the rest there are 80,870 graduates and 12,711 with higher qualifications who have not been able to find jobs. In terms of absolute numbers graduates from about 9% of the total job seekers, art graduates accounts for nearly half of them.
to as many as 100,000 unemployed engineers, despite the reduced intake in universities and polytechnical institutions. Those with a master’s or bachelor’s degree end up with a clerk’s position, or at best a low income job, totally irrelevant to their qualifications.

(f) Youth Culture

One of the major developments that is affecting the lives of students in the more industrialised countries, and one which is beginning to appear in the underdeveloped countries, is the new Youth-Culture. The modern youth culture has been slow to gain recognition, and various aspects of it have been treated often as deviant behaviour, which has been dealt with by suppressive measures or ridicule. However the youth culture is becoming a permanent aspect of our modern society, and is gradually being recognised as such. It tends to arise in modern societies in which the family has lost some of its importance as a socialising agency. Industrialisation means an increase in specialisation, not only in the world of work, but also in such agencies serving children as youth organisation, Sunday schools, sports, clubs and summer camps. These agencies tend to accentuate age groupings, and tend to separate children from their parents. The school now monopolises an
increasing amount of the child's time, because of the expansion of education and training, and because of an increase in extracurricular activities.\textsuperscript{11} The commercial world further helps to segregate the young people from their elders by catering to them through radio and T.V. shows, advertisements, sports and science fiction magazines, and popular music.

Not all the Indian students can afford all the mentioned means of recreation, but to a large extent they are occupied most of the time by a few of these luxuries, depending on what the family can afford. For those who can afford to have scooters, motor-bikes, cars, or cycles, they have additional freedom. This freedom enables the youth to escape supervision and to enjoy what they consider to be "fun" in an "anonymous" environment. The young people are separated from the adult society into a subculture of their own.

In developing countries this youth culture is still in its developing phase. Students through living in hostels and acquiring new knowledge and ways of behaving are becoming more and more separated from their families. This separation occurs particularly when parents are

\textsuperscript{11}James S. Coleman, \textit{The Adolescent Society}, p. 34.

illiterate or poorly educated, or live in villages. This factor of separation, and as yet unknown factors contribute to their feeling of insecurity, and to their uncertainty of their roles in society. Some writers have referred to the position of students as a marginal one, in that they are considered wholly either as adults or children.

Another effect of this new youth culture is that as young people are separated from their parents and the values they represent, they tend to resent parental authority. This attitude is carried over to their relations with all adults. Even if they go to a university where there is the fullest academic freedom, the most up to date facilities, and close relationship between staff and students there is inherent tendency in students to take a critical attitude towards the status quo. This critical attitude is the product of a tradition of criticism, and alienation, and of the rebellious attitude of youth towards their elders in modern society.

As the gulf widens between parents and students, the students feel that their elders cannot possibly understand them or their problems. Many writers have said that the alienation of the younger generation is a product of conflicting values and demands which many of them are facing. Others have spoken of the 'anomie', that an individual may suffer when his personality is not stably organised, about
a coherent system of values, goals and expectations.\textsuperscript{12}

This anomie occurs when the mores of society are so vague, that they cannot act as guides for behaviour.

Modernization tends to produce forces that undermine the stable value systems of a society to such an extent that there is a good deal of confusion until new patterns develop that are appropriate for new situations.

One of the most conspicuous features of the present situation lies in the extent to which patterns of orientation which the individual can be expected to take completely for granted have disappeared. The complexity of influences which impinge upon him have increased enormously. In many or most situations the society does not provide him with only one socially sanctioned definition of the situation and approved pattern of behaviour, but with a considerable number of possible alternatives, the order of preference between which is by no means clear.\textsuperscript{13}


\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 128. "It has been to an extraordinary extent a period of the 'debunking' of traditional values and ideas, and one in which for previously stable culture patterns in such fields as religion, ethics, and philosophy, no comparably stable substitutes have appeared, - rather a conspicuously unstable factionalism and tendency to faddistic fluctuations."
The Element of Fun

The need for emotional release, or fun, is an additional reason given by students as a cause of unrest. It is of particular importance when we consider the tensions wrought by rapid social changes. The excitement of being part of a crowd, the participation in physical combat and the destruction of property motivate many students to join demonstrations. They are at this point in their teens or early twenties, an age often called "the age of revolt". They are attracted by the idea of action, for at the height of their physical energy, intellectual curiosity, and their rebellion against authority. In sum they are a "human-dynamite".

With these universal changes in mind, we could assess the reasons given by students for their demonstrations; namely economic problems, moral protests, educational reforms, political crisis, and emotional release.

In fact the stated reasons for student action may be merely additional factors in motivating students who have already been upset by the changing conditions of their environment, to go into collective action. Another additional factor has been the political climate in the country. We have also seen that the restlessness of students do not always result in political action in both the highly industrialised countries and the developing ones.
Conclusion

We have thus seen in the process of modernization in India, - the passing of a traditional society, not wholly modern, but still caught up in its transitional phase. We have also studied the changing roles of its members, especially the youth. The struggle of the young to adapt themselves to modern institutions and their functions, - without being able to reap the benefits of a modern society, seems too great. The Indian leadership, and other elders of the society have not always been able to give the young what they had initially promised or preached. Political, economic and social change have accelerated simultaneously, bringing about too many anomalies, of which the young are a victim. Caught up in a modernising society, youth are still evaluated by their elders in terms of traditional values.
CHAPTER IV
STUDENT ACTIVISM AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Introduction.

This brings us to the next part of our discussion. Can student-activism in India be classified as a social movement? What are the characteristics of a social movement? Social movements have their inception in a condition of unrest, and derive their motive power on the one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand from wishes and hopes for a new scheme or system of living. In its beginning a social movement is amorphous, poorly organized, and without form; the collective behaviour is on the primitive level, the mechanisms of interaction are elementary and spontaneous.

Social Movements.

Student movements come within the category of general social movements. Their background is constituted by gradual and pervasive changes in the values of people - changes which can be called cultural drifts.\(^1\) Such cultural

drifts stand for a general shifting in the ideas of people, particularly along the line of the conceptions which people have of themselves, and of their rights and privileges. It signifies the emergence of a new set of values which influence people in the way in which they look upon their own lives. They acquire new dispositions and interests, and accordingly become sensitized in new directions. These new images of themselves, which people begin to develop in response to cultural drifts, are vague and indefinite, and correspondingly the behaviour in response to such images is uncertain and without aim.

General social movements take the form of groping and uncoordinated efforts. They have only a general direction towards which they move in a slow halting, yet persistent fashion. As movements they are unorganized, with neither established leadership, nor recognized membership, and little guidance and control. They cover a wide range of educational, social, and political problems, in each area of which it represents a search for solutions.

Student-activism is a regular phenomenon of the Indian academic scene. However it cannot be classified as a full fledged social movement. The activism is sporadic, and erupts in the initial months of the academic year, which lasts over a couple of months. The unrest flares up in a few campuses, and then gradually spreads all over. A few
campuses still play a leading role. The point to be made here is that during the month or two that the agitation lasts, the students do turn violent, and at times cause a great deal of damage to public property. In the process however, they have drawn attention to inadequacies or corruption within educational systems. They have at times spearheaded the changes that must be made to meet new conditions. Many of the student's protests have been directed towards seeking action which will in some way ameliorate poor conditions in their colleges. Students have come to believe that having strikes is the only way in which students can get things done.²

As the Indian students become more firmly organized on a national basis and as they learn the skills and tactics of leadership through experience, they will play an even more vital part in helping to transform the educational system into one which more adequately fills their needs. At the present time their frustrations are being channelled more through the colleges than through any other media, and of course they are politically exploited.

²Joseph Di Bona, "Indiscipline and student leadership in an Indian University", in S. M. Lipset Ed. Student Politics, pp. 372-93. Di Bona discusses the political role that student unions have played in some universities.
When students are able to release their tensions through other outlets, such as better sport facilities, more organized entertainments, when the family becomes less authoritarian, and when a more liberal attitude arises towards the mixing of the sexes, then the colleges may not bear the whole brunt of frustrations arising from social change. However as far as the Indian educational system is concerned, it is likely that for some time students will constitute the main protest group. It may take many years to remove disrupting political influences in the colleges and universities, and lecturers may take a long time to become a truly professional group. It is also likely that as student protests become better organized, and as the students begin to gain a more powerful and respected position, and as the educational system changes to meet more of the students needs, the number of spontaneous outbursts and the instances of violence will gradually diminish.

Constructive Efforts.

Some of the constructive outputs of student activism have been as follows:

(a) They have at various times fought for the lowering of tuition fees and are preventing a rise in tuition.

(b) They have also demanded admissions of students who
had been denied it on certain grounds.

(c) They have at times, pleaded for the reinstitution of teachers who had been dismissed. An interesting case of this kind occurred in Delhi, in 1970, when a Muslim lecturer of Shyam Lal College was dismissed because of his marriage to a Hindu girl. The students kept agitating, till the lecturer was reinstated by educational authorities.

(d) In certain instances, they also have acted as guardians of public values. Very often we come across news to the effect that a student group on some campus demanded the ousting of a corrupt Vice-Chancellor or Registrar, for mal-practices, in the administration. They are not willing to tolerate the gap between theory and practice. When the elders of the institution deviate from norms, that are constantly preached to them, - their confidence is bound to erode.

(e) They have endlessly demanded that conditions in their hostels be improved, that they should be given better food.

(f) They have struggled for representation on academic bodies, and decision making bodies. The Kothari Commission was careful to make this recommendation in its report. Many universities have formed committees
to associate students with conduct of educational affairs. Of course direct participation is still not granted.

(g) They have fought for bus-concessions and concessions to cinemas, and have succeeded considerably.

(h) They have agitated, for more jobs. They want education to be of some practical value to them. Here again the Kothari Commission, laid emphasis on 'vocationalizing-Education'.

The newspaper reports of 1972 bear similar reports of student activism. There has been trouble all over India. An interesting thing to note in these reports is that, in that year the teachers, in Punjab and Haryana have been a cause of closure of universities.3 The teachers of private colleges, agitated for security of services, and parity in pay with government teachers.

Destructive Influences.

Students in their enthusiasm for 'fun', and 'adventure', have at times turned very irrational. This has not only done physical harm to university and public property, but has lowered the standard of education, their esteem in the eyes of the elders, and has given the entire

3 Indian Express, Nov. 2, 1972.
movement an aura of irresponsibility.

(a) Due to student demonstrations examinations have had to be postponed. This has affected the entire working of the university, and forms a vicious circle, - out of which neither the students nor the administration can eventually free themselves. Teachers are overworked, grading is done hurriedly, results are poor, colleges open late. In sum, this adds to the already existing confusion.

(b) A lot of property is damaged. This creates a law and order problem. Stiff handling by police authorities, further complicates matters. Buildings are set on fire, official documents are destroyed, and other damages are caused. As a result a few get injured, and some others killed.

(c) Another destructive effect of these activities is that the more serious and intelligent students feel hindered in their studies. They could have otherwise benefited more from their course schedule.

(d) Defiance of authority when carried to extremes, affects the relationship of elders, and the youth. The former view every activity of theirs with suspicion and disrespect, and the young are not able to communicate their dissatisfaction properly.
A Comparison.

It will not be our purpose here to attempt a global comparison of student activism. We would instead make a comparison of the activities of Indian students and the American youth. The comparison would be justified in the sense that, even though America happens to be one of the most affluent countries, her youth faces similar problems. Since 'development' is not an absolute term, and the developed societies have only reached a point in the continuum, it is natural that the youth there are going to face problems too, as their societies are evolving too, and social changes have their impact on the young.

In 1968 the political activity of American students received almost as much attention from the mass media as the presidential campaign. But less than a decade ago, most observers of the academic community lamented the political quiescence of America's youth. Then it was felt that America's youth were almost entirely absorbed in the "fun and games" of college life and that they had little interest or time for other important matters, like righting of social and economic wrongs, or taking an active part in the academic life of the university community. By now almost every major university has experienced a strong dissatisfaction with the status quo.
Student power first caught the attention of the public in 1960. In April of that year, the student non-violent coordinating committee was established to coordinate student participation in civil rights sit-ins then being carried on throughout the south and in June, a group of students met in New York and formed the students for a democratic society.

In 1964 started the Berkley Free Speech Movement, the first student protest designed to obtain concessions from a school administration through mass demonstrations. The success of the Free Speech Movement encouraged students on other campuses in the United States between 1964 and 1968. The student demands have covered every conceivable issue, from demands for better foods in cafeterias, to opposition to the Vietnam war. The tactics employed have ranged from peaceful picketing to the violent, physical occupation of university building.

Student protests reached its height in the spring of 1968. Even the University of Massachusetts which had so far been spared student turmoil and demonstration, experienced a manifestation of student power.\footnote{See John H. Fenton and Gail Gleason, Student Power at the University of Massachusetts, Bureau of Government Research, University of Massachusetts, 1969.} The results of the
sample survey of the University of Massachusetts student body revealed rather widely held feelings of discontent with certain aspects of University life. In response to a question concerning the quality of teaching at the University, 68 percent said that poor teaching had been a very important problem for them. A same proportion were also unhappy with the school's course requirements. 64 percent of the sample wanted an equal voice on better with faculty and administration in determining course offerings, 83 percent felt that students should evaluate professors and courses, compile the results and make the findings available to the college community. Only a minority were interested in a major voice in business decisions (17 percent) long-range planning (43 percent), appointment of faculty (12 percent), and faculty promotion, tenure, and dismissal (27 percent).

The mood of the students now had shifted from Vietnam to attack on student frustration with courses, food and registration.

The study made by Prof. Fenton demonstrated that at the University of Massachusetts there is a fairly broad base of students who are unhappy with the University as it functions, and who feel that things would be better if students had a greater power in the decision making process. These students however, unlike the Indian students, do not
feel that the administration should be overthrown. They sought change but felt that change can be brought about by working with the government. Like student-activism in Indian universities, there was on the campus of University of Massachusetts only a small group of activists, who were aware and the others, were apathetic, or did not know what was going on.

A second survey of the student body was conducted in the spring of 1969. The students' faith in their ability to obtain reforms by working through the university's existing institutions declined from 72 percent to 58 percent in 1969. The students were more sympathetic than ever with the problems of American Negroes. Sixty-seven percent felt that America's black population was treated unfairly in 1968; by 1969 the figure had reached 84 percent.

As student populations change and institutions grow, it is natural that the nature of political activism will also change. In India, the expansion of universities, and the growth of student population to include the sons and daughters of the low status families have had a deep impact on the nature of student unrest. The inability to speak English, the bad job situation, poor academic conditions all results in built-in frustrations which government policies cannot put to an end.

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\[5\] Ibid.
Student unrest in the west does have an ideological tone, and the top student leadership is also politically sophisticated, still most student unrest in the west is not very different from those in developing societies. In America students live in more favourable conditions, and have better employment opportunities. They are more often interested in university reform and concerned with intellectual issues like free speech on campus. A large number of students in the United States, as we have already seen, have been interested in the issue of civil rights and negro equality. 6 

The interference by political parties in the Indian student unrest is a rather unique phenomenon. It almost never happens in American universities. Though government interference is there in institutions financed by the state, even then political parties are almost never involved.

The agitation of Indian students are usually on regional issues, and seldom national problems. Though the language issue was a national problem, it had its regional overtones, and student protest, forced the government to reconsider its language policies. Most of the student

protest in India has a direct meaning for them, whereas students in America are able to take a more ideological view of their universities and societies.

In India and other developing countries, the university has assumed an important political function. Not only does the university train the elite of the nation, but in countries where there is only a small politically aware 'public' higher educational institutions can play a direct role as well.

There are thus points of similarities and differences in the student movements of the west and the developing societies. The differences accounted for are due to the different conditions and environment in which the students in India and other developing countries find themselves.

Conclusion.

As a result of the modernizing process, the students have acquired a new set of values, which influence them in the way they look at themselves. The new images which they have are indefinite, and so their behaviour in response to such images seem uncertain and without aim.

Student activism in India has been sporadic, and is regional. Their frustrations are channeled through their
own colleges and universities than any other media. We have also seen that their activism have brought about constructive and destructive results. The Indian condition is part of a universal problem.
CONCLUSION

Indian universities are as we have seen greatly influenced by politics. Students have been made use of in determining the selection of candidates for the post of the Vice-Chancellor, as happened in Osmania in 1966. The Andhra Government's interference with the autonomy of the university and its efforts to displace Dr. D. S. Reddy as Vice-Chancellor drew students at the centre of the power struggle. Students have also viewed themselves as being powerful enough to change the decisions of those in authority both in the government and within the university itself. This belief is reinforced by the attention and publicity their activities receive through the mass media. Force used by police against student crowds is generally denounced by politicians and others who exhibit a sympathetic attitude towards them. Indian Vice-Chancellors who are anxious to get over their term without serious trouble breaking out on campus often assure students that their demands would be considered sympathetically. Each concession is considered by students as a victory and it spurs them on to further action.

Every major issue of educational reform has been reviewed from a political angle with the result that education has threatened to become dysfunctional in relation to the goals of national development. Nowhere is this seen in
a more glaring manner than language conflicts all over the country. Both in North India and in the students have been worked up to violent action by politicians on matters concerning language.

From the analysis in the preceding pages, however, a distinction could be made between "student-politics", and " politicization of students". The former is part of the social life of the student community, it widens the avenues of involvement and prepares the students for wider political participation when he leaves the university. The latter is at times inimical to the spirit of the university which should stand away from prevailing political conflicts, if it is to pursue knowledge and fulfill its high aims. For the sake of clarity we could separate the interrelated parts, which together contributes to the politicization of students:

(1) The conscious attempt by political parties, and teacher and student politicians, to orient the outlook of students towards specific ideological positions and seek their support in certain causes and use them for propagating knowledge of party programmes. The ideology of extremist parties has at times made a powerful appeal to the idealism of youth notably in states characterised by poverty and massive unemployment among educated youth. An example of this would be the Naxalites in India.
(2) The growing awareness among students of being a distinct and influential part of society and politics, and of the possibility of changing policy decisions.

(3) The university world like the rest of Indian society is divided by caste, language and regional considerations. Thus arises the struggle for power and equality and the consciousness of benefits accruing to particular individuals, or groups within the university. In many ways it is the policy in miniature.

(4) Students also are drawn into conflicts concerning university teachers and the administration, or between the university and the government.

(5) In student movements the youth find a good opportunity for training their qualities of leadership and preparing for a political career. Politicians look to these students for extending party influence. They are useful as contact men, and it is from their ranks that political recruitment takes place. The entire student community is now divided into groups having leanings towards different political parties in the country. These groups fight among themselves exactly in the same manner as political parties do. Election to the college union is fought on party
lines. In student-union elections different groups are actively aided with funds and advice by the respective parties. This is quite a dangerous source of student indiscipline. Of course teachers and students have also invited politicians in their own struggles.

Universities in India are not going to be able to solve their problems quickly. The social problems which have stimulated student activism, Casteism, changing economic patterns are deeper issues. Societies regardless of their political orientations find it difficult to live up to their professed goal.

Student indiscipline and activism will continue in India at a fairly high level. If factional politics within the universities is curtailed, and other reform measures taken, the amount and stridency of dissent can be limited but it cannot be eliminated without basic changes in the educational system and in the social order.

"Access", not "excellence" is viewed as a fundamental human right. Universities are increasingly viewed in almost the same light as public parks or public libraries, for social and not academic purposes alone. The students are cynical about "higher education", in relation to life as they experience it.

Rapid expansion in India made necessary the
utilization of many non-intellectuals in the decision-making process and in teaching. In India the priority made was in favor of quantity. More serious is the speed and ease with which degrees are attained. For instance the three year B.A. follows ten years of schooling, most graduates thus receive their degrees at the age of nineteen.

When economic progress does not meet expectations, the nation almost crippled by famine, and the political parties are factionalised and regionally oriented there was to be implications for the university. Political stability has often led to a lack of student militancy.

It would be unfair to make a categorical statement at this stage of India's development. A new nation is bound to encounter these problems. It, therefore, seems fair that the "incipient-elite" demands incorporation into the system.


Chandra, Prabha. *Student Movement in India*, Lucknow: All India's Student Federation, 1938.


