

Student Activism: Social Realization and Implications

Dr. Lokeshwari*

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

*Corresponding Author: lokeshwari.uniraj@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the student activism and movements and provides a conceptual understanding of its various aspects. It addresses topics such as student unrest, protests, and different forms of agitation. The chapter examines types of agitation, including resistance, revolutionary, persuasive, and student indiscipline. It also delves into the causes of student unrest and agitation, covering both on-campus and off-campus issues across various universities. The identified causes include economic factors, issues with the examination and admission processes, inadequate educational facilities, lack of food and shelter, and poor supervision. Additionally, the chapter highlights student movements in India, along with an analysis of the different types of student movements that have emerged.

Keywords: Student Activism, Student Movement, Agitation, Protest, Student Unrest.

Introduction

Students are an integral part of our society. Individually as a body they represent the younger generation and constitutes more fortunate stratum of society. Naturally they can't be viewed in isolation. We can say that the problem attracted the attention of hundreds of scholars and the leaders for drawing references about the patterns of behaviours and the critical relationships. The society has been witnessing frequent strikes, mass demonstration and occasionally even violent agitation by the students. Yet their problem of students is usually described in general terms and relevant issues are seldom discussed in specific details, therefore, real understanding is rarely achieved.

National Education Policy (1986) has focused on the problem of norm less institutions; careless teachers; worst evaluation system; lack of discipline; interference of political, diplomatic and unsocial elements in the education system.

According to *Vidyarthi* (1976), the present revolt is symptomatic of the sickness of our universities.

The cause and pattern of student unrest is not the same in every college and universities. Hence every college and university suffering from student unrests needs to analyze and study the cause of restlessness among their students to curb the problem of student unrest. People find their life experiences shaded by the society in which they live. Their development, status, pattern of everyday life, aspiration, opportunities, health all are affected by the nature of society. While people may wish to change the environment but their lives have already been shaped and constrained by their socio-cultural environment and experiences. Cause of any type of discontent, unrest, disturbance in people can be traced down to their socio-cultural environment and experiences. As a student, their educational institutions, its environment and the on campus issues play a vital role in shaping the actions of the students and play a significant role in student unrest.

Conceptual Understanding

• Student Unrest

Unrest means "disturbed condition". It is the state of disillusionment and dissatisfaction. Social unrest reflects collective disillusionment, discontentment and frustration of the group, community or society. If there is unrest among student of a university, it is not perceived as the problem of 'student

unrest' as such. It is only when students all over the country feel frustrated on common issues like admission, content of courses, the examination system and the representation in academic bodies, can we say that there exists the problem of student unrest in our society. The emphasis in the concept of social unrest is on 'collective frustration and disillusionment on common issues of the groups in the society.'

On this basis, student unrest may be defined as the 'manifestation of collective frustration of the students in the education institution. It is manifested when the existing norms in the education are perceived by the student as ineffective or harmful to the extent that they offend them; they feel so disillusioned and disgusted that they recognize the need for changing the norms.

Therefore, student unrest is characterized by:

- Collective discontent
- Dysfunctional conditions
- Public concern
- Need for a change in existing norms

• **Protest**

Social protest is an expression of disapproval to something, a person is powerless to prevent or avoid. It is a mode of communicating discontentment rather than direct action. It is an expression of outrage against injustice. The important elements of social protest are:

- Action expresses grievance
- Points out to a conviction of injustice
- Protesters are unable to connect the condition directly by their own effect
- Action is meant to provoke ameliorative steps by the target group
- Protesters bank upon the combination of coercion, persuasion sympathy and fear to move the target group.

Thus, social protest may lead to agitation and movement.

• **Agitation**

Agitation aims 'to bring grievance and injustice to the notice of people in power.' It is to shake up, to move, to stir up, to anxiety and to disturb the power holders. It is characterized by:

- Collective reaction to stimuli
- Action based on feeling of injustice
- Emergence of leadership and mobilization for action
- Growth and spread of a generalized belief among the youth which identifies the source of discontent, frustration and deprivation

Student agitation is the behavior of the students whose goal is neither injury to a person nor destruction of public property but social protest. It is neither the result of innate destructive drive nor it is an inborn reaction to frustration. It is a learned behavior. Various forms of youth agitations are: demonstrations, slogans shouting, strikes, hunger strikes, road blocks (rasta roko), gheraos and boycott of examination.

Agitation can be violent or non-violent. In case of India, out of 5338 student agitations in 1988 only 18% were violent, in comparison to 15% violent agitations in 1987, 43% in 1986 and 19% in 1985. Further 56% agitations were related to non academic issues (within the campus tension). In August and September 1990, many universities and colleges in North India faced the problem of student agitation on the reservation issues and remained closed for about 2 months. Similar agitations took place in 1994 in some other parts of the country.

In 1960, the UGC Committee pointed out number of reasons for student agitations:

- Inappropriate teaching in campus, hostel and other infrastructure.
- Poor administration or functioning of college and universities.
- Demand for changes in existing norms pertaining to admissions teaching and process of admission.

- Economic causes, like for example a routine demand to fees, to develop the support of wing scholarship.

Types of Agitation

- **Resistance Agitation**

The main objective of resistance based agitation is to keep the power holder in their place. For example the discussions of one university to show reduced marks on the mark sheet, if on revaluation the candidates marks are reduced, is resisted by the students through agitations which ultimately forced the academic council of the university to decide that marks would not be reduced on revaluation. Resistance agitations express dismay and concern of the students at the direction in which the university is moving.

- **Revolutionary Agitation**

These agitations are at bringing sudden sweeping changes in the educational or the social systems. For example, forcing the authorities to decide that no student will be declared as failed but will be promoted to higher class and will be given the opportunity to appear in the failed paper till he clears it. Instances of revolutionary agitation can be illustrated by the youth agitation in China in 1987; the ADSU agitation in Assam in 1984; and Uttarakhand agitation in Uttar Pradesh in 1994.

- **Persuasive Agitation**

In these agitations, the youth attempt to change the attitude of the power holder by discussing their problems with them across a table and making them accept their view point. These agitation range from the relatively trivial issues (postponing the exams, extending the exam date, etc.) to significant issues (increasing the number of admission seats) to real serious issues (giving representation in academic bodies, associating students with decision making processes. Protest, demonstration, shouting of slogans, persuading the power holders to meet the representatives of students to try and understand their views and demands are some of the methods used in this kind of agitation.

Student Indiscipline

Indiscipline is disobedience to authority or disrespect to elders or deviation from norms or refusing to accept control or rejecting goals and means. Student indiscipline leads to the use of undesirable methods. It is the initial symptom as well as the result of a disturbed campus.

According to the report on '*problem of student indiscipline in India*' in 1960 presented by the committee appointed by UGC to investigate student indiscipline- "Indiscipline is mass moral turpitude and collective defiance of authority and the use of techniques in seeking redressal of real or imagined grievances which are not appropriate for students to use."

The committee included 3 types of behaviour in student indiscipline:

- **Disrespect for teachers**
- **Misbehaviour with girls**
- **Destroying property**

Some scholars maintain that 3 situations create indiscipline among student:

- Students lose interest in the goals of the (educational) institutions. In such a situation, they remain members (of the institution) but do not follow its norms.
- Students accept the goals but doubt whether the institutions can achieve them. They try to improve the institution by deviating from its norms.
- Norms of institutions fail to achieve the goals, therefore, students want a change in norms.

Shah (1968: 56-63) conducted a study of University students in Gujarat. He classified students on the basis of their social status into four categories to point out the type of students who are more undisciplined or in whom we find more unrest:

- **High Status, High Ability**

These are students who are eligible for admission in any course, who have full confidence in self and who can adjust to all situations who take keen interest in studies. They remain confident of achieving goals because of these abilities of hard work, and therefore, they do not create any problem and remain away from strikes demonstrations.

- **Low Status, Low Ability**

These are students some of whom take interest in agitations but some keep themselves from such activities. It depends on their peer group as well as their personal aspirations.

- **Low Status, High Status**

These are students who have high ability and armature who try to differentiate between right and wrong, work hard, aim at good percentage and grades, remain away from activities which harm them since they have to depend on themselves for getting jobs and promotions and do not participate in strikes and demonstrations. However, there are some students in this group who in spite of their abilities they fail to get recognition as they belong to poor class or to the SCs, STs or OBCs. These students participate in agitations because of their frustrations.

- **High Status, Low Ability**

These are students who can get admission in the desired course because of their influence. However, they cannot compete with good students of high academic standards because of their low ability, therefore, develop new non- academic values and behavior patterns. For example, they find nothing wrong in using unfair means, remaining absent from class, creating noise in the classroom, spending more time in college canteens, using pressure tactics on teachers, attempting to bribe examiners, participating in agitation, instigating others to indulge in such activities.

Thus, more unrest is found among the students of third and fourth categories.

Causation of Student Activism and Agitation

There are psychological and sociological theories to explain student activism and agitations. Where the former emphasizes on the personality of individual, the other puts stress on society.

Discontent Theory

Discontent theory is a psychological theory which holds that agitations are rooted in discontent. Students who either have no aspirations or are contented and comfortable with what they are likely to have, will have no interest in agitation. But, the angered students who feel victimized by outrageous injustice, or those who feel even mildly annoyed with existing structures and opportunities will collectively act to pressurize the power holders to bring some change. It is probably true that without discontent amongst the students, there will be no agitations. But discontent is not an adequate explanation. There is no convincing evidence of any close association between the level of grievance and discontent amongst the student and its level of agitation activity.

Relative Deprivation Theory

This theory was propounded by *Samuel Stouffer* in 1949. It can be properly explained by distinguishing between discontent, deprivation and relative deprivation. A group feels 'deprived' if it is prevented from using or enjoying a goal which it regards as attractive or desirable, but it feels 'discontent' when it had been anticipating the pleasure to be achieved with object and then cannot fulfill this expectation. Relative deprivation is the perception that one as a group is less well-off than others to whom it compared itself (*Myres*, 1988). Deprivation or disadvantage is measured not by objective standards but by comparison with the relatively superior advantages of others whom one desires to emulate. It, thus, talks of the gap between expectations and realizations. The group which wants little and has little feels less deprived than the one which has much but expects still more.

Discontent and relative deprivation can be seen as the cause of unrest in students. Students feel the lack opportunities, limitations of their higher education, corruption, political manipulations, nepotism and inequality. Discontent may be a necessary condition for student unrest and agitation.

On and Off- Campus Issues

Two broad categories can be listed as the causes of unrest and violence, namely 'on campus' issues and 'off campus' issues:

- **On Campus Issues**

On campus issues are related with to the failure of educational institution in serving its goals and those problems faced by students in the campus environment that causes unrest. For example- poor infrastructure, irregular classes, examination fees, unqualified teachers, indiscipline, outdated facilities, lack of counseling, poor redressal mechanism, etc.

- **Off- Campus Issues**

Off campus issues are related to the economic, political, cultural and social factors outside the campus. For example- economic insecurity, unemployment, change in norms, values and attitudes in social institutions, generation gap, effects of westernization and globalization, confrontation between students and number of other groups like government, caste, political party, criminal and terrorist gangs, drug addictions, etc.

Extent of Student Unrest

- **In the Economic Field**

Today, the major cause of tension, dissatisfaction, unrest and disappointment in youth and students is because of the presence of economic insecurity in their life. Students want to do a job or occupation after completing their education, wants to earn her livelihood but she don't get such facilities. They send their application, go for interviews and fail every time. As a result despair and disappointment grows inside them. Student activism in economic field is seen in the form of slogan shouting, demonstration and gheraos, road blocks against the administration and industrialist regarding anomaly in job placement. The violent form of student activism in economic field is seen in various states, especially in west Bengal. There youth and student participate in movements against industrialist, even fights, kills and indulge in robbery. They try to fulfill their economic needs with the help of violent means.

- **In the Field of Education**

Today, hardly any college, institution or university would be left untouched without demonstrations, strikes, fights, arsons, destruction of property, road blocks, gheraos, etc. Students strikes every now and then for any small or big issues, shout slogans against teachers, principals, administration and infrequently perform gheraos and fights. Students demonstrate sometimes for admission, sometime for student union election, examination, etc. All these are expression of student unrest.

- **In political field**

The political parties want to use youth power for their own greedy needs. Many times they try to misguide the youths and use them in stirring commotion, property destruction, uproar, riot, revolt, etc. Misguided by them students indulge in anti- social behavior. The craze and fashion to participate in elections and politics is prevalent and increasing in students and youth.

- **In public life**

Today, student activism is clearly seen in the assembly council, meetings gathering, theatre, cinema, market places, and sports. Riots, uproar and fights happen every now then on entry in meetings and cultural programs, for tickets in theatre and sports field, etc. Large number of youth and students carry out such activities as no one can be proved responsible for such collective crime, no one can be proved guilty. This is the reason that youth and students carry out such activities in mass population because of such power and cause indiscipline and encourage violent activities.

Thus, the student activism and their problems in India are the result of various conditions. Today youth and students have to face insecurity in various fields and because of value struggle and identification. As a result they are in the state of emotional instability.

On the causes of youth aggressive behaviour, *Green* (2008) mentions that it is the results of frustration, trauma, neglect, watching of violent films, as well as verbal or physical attack.

Violence by youth intensely harms not only the people involved but their families, friends and communities. According to *Kadiri and Muhammed* (2011), Behavioural problems by young ones add greatly to the cost of health and welfare services, decrease the value of property, decrease the productivity and a range of essential services and thus, generally undermine the fabric of society.

Causes of Student Unrest

According to the *reports of committee* appointed by UGC for the study of problem of student unrest in India in 1960, there are 5 factors or reasons responsible for students unrest, they are:

- Economic cause
- Examination and admission process
- Lack of educational facilities
- Lack of food and shelter facilities
- Wrong supervision

According to *Humayun Kabir* (1958), there are four causes responsible for student unrest- loss of leadership by teachers; general loss of idealism; defects in existing system of examination; and growth of economic difficulties.

According to *Mudaliar commission* examination process, political movement, student union, decreasing social control and lack of ideal educators are the cause of student unrest.

Thus, the major causes of student unrest are:

- **Educational Factors**

Various educational factors are responsible for student unrest which are as follows:

- **Lack of facilities in education institute**

Insufficient facilities of library and practical labs, lack of teachers, unavailability of wanted subject, lack of hostels, lack of food and shelter facilities, lack of sports facilities, lack of proper canteen facility, etc. cause student unrest and to have these facilities students take the help of agitation and movements.

- **Defective education**

Present education system has many defects. It doesn't prepare one to earn her livelihood. This system of education was introduced by East India Company with a view to produce qualified clerical staff. Before independence it was thought to change the education system into a better and ideal system. But there has been no change for the betterment, in fact, there has only been a steady erosion of standards.

- **Examination and admission system**

Admission method in education institute medium of education used by teachers, changes in examination system and changes in the rules of passing or failing, etc. are also responsible for student unrest. Students demonstrate and oppose changes in examination dates and timing, change in schedule, use of Hindi medium instead of English and passing without giving examination.

- **Increasing gap in teacher-student relationship**

Today, a good relationship is not present between teachers and students. Due to large teacher-student ratio, a teacher is not able to have a close and good relationship with each and every student, understand and solve their problems. Their control over student has weakened; they take interest in outside activities than teaching and research. Often those teachers choose teaching profession who were not able to get any other job, such people have little to no interest in their teaching profession. Inexperienced and unqualified teachers are also successful. A teacher's duty is guide motivate and encourage students towards the right way which can only be done by dedicated and qualified teachers.

Change in Norms, Sanctions, Values and Attitude

Earlier time witnessed a norm in education to respect teachers. But with passage of time and due importance of fees in education sector, that this norm has been changed. The modern students hardly have any respect towards their teachers; the idea of serving the teachers is beyond their comprehension. This discourages the teacher to give their best to the student. Thus, the norms both on the part of teacher and the taught have been reversed.

Formerly, the teachers' attempt to maintain discipline was sanctioned by the administration, the community and even by the students themselves. Even corporal punishment was appreciated. Today attempts to discipline the students don't receive against the strength of the student unions. The parents do not approve punishment any more. Corporal punishment is opposed by the parents.

- **Familial Factors**

Family background and conditions are also responsible for student unrest. At present the joint family system is breaking down and nuclear families are increasing. The control of family on an individual and their role in socialization of children is also decreasing. As a result, tension and unrest grows inside children. Lack of education in family, its economic condition, indifference of father towards children, decreasing familial control, etc. also cause unrest.

- **Environmental Factors**

Student unrest is the result of the effects of environment of Indian society is changing. It is in a state of turmoil. At one side we are abandoning traditional values and on the other side are adopting the modern western values. Both these values are conflicting in the nature and cause stress and disturbance in a person's life, they could not decide which to adopt and which to let go. This causes unrest.

- **Economic Factors**

The economic conditions found in Indian society are also responsible for student activism and unrest. Poverty and unemployment is widespread in India. There is a great difference in the number of job seekers and the number of jobs available. As a result unemployment is a serious problem found in educated youth. In a country where most of the people are poor and even after completing education don't have job security, the presence of unrest in such youths is obvious. Rising prices, costly education, increasing fee, decrease in scholarship and their partial distribution, etc are responsible for student unrest.

- **Political Factors**

Political factors are also responsible for student unrest. At present, a nation's youth can't remain unaffected from events occurring around the world. Student movement is a worldwide happening. Whether a nation is developed or underdeveloped, democratic, communist or autocratic, in every one of them student unrest can be seen in one form or the other. Movements against government and the power holders or huge demonstrations for rights are done all over the world by students. In 1947, Indian students participated in movements for freedom. But after freedom the student's movements and unrest has changed completely.

- **Generation Gap**

The generation gap between old and new generation is also responsible for unrest in many ways. There exist a great difference between the values, belief, behavior, norms and sanctions of the new and old generation. This is also seen in education world. To great extent the students represents the new generation and the teachers represent the old generation. Thus, generation gap among teachers and students is also responsible for students' unrest.

Thus, it can be concluded that the major causes of student unrest and agitations are: indiscriminate admissions, overcrowded classrooms; lack of physical and recreational activities in colleges; corrupt examination system; lack of opportunities for emotional outlet through student bodies; lack of moral instruction; uncertainty among students in respect of their future employment; and frustration among teachers. The problem of student unrest is mainly a problem of education sphere, therefore the solutions are hidden in academic terms only.

Students' Movement in India

While there have been too many explanations of student unrest in India there has not been much analysis of the problem from the perspective of students their expectations from the political and educational system (Ray, 1979). In India, studies conducted on student unrest are by: *Kabir* (1958), *Ross* (1969), *Sarkar* (1965), *Srivastava* (1974), *Vidhyarthi* (1976), *Ray* (1972), *Mehra* (1977), etc.

The study by *kabir* (1958) is a pioneering work and it is "the first attempt to look at the problems of students' unrest in the perspective of social changes- affected by the Second World War and the attainment of independence." (*Bhatt*, 1972)

Students' Movement as a part of National Movement

The phenomenon of student unrest started in India with the agitation of 1905 led by Calcutta and Dacca students to oppose the partition of Bengal. As a part of the national struggle it was encouraged by all political parties and welcomed by the public. Since then student unrest and their participation in demonstration, strikes, processions and mass meetings has become a common phenomenon in Indian universities. But the cause for unrest has changed from national struggle to wide spread frustration among students and instead of becoming a positive force in nation building, are getting increasingly resentful. It is no longer a local and a naïve phenomenon. It is by now much threatening in proportions, transmitting shock waves to every nook and corner of not only a particular region but of the entire globe. The students are showing their discontentment by behaving against social norms in a manner which bewilder the elders. Thus, the problem of student unrest is not only a cause to worry for educational administrative authorities, but it has become a national concern.

A study by *S.K. Ghosh* (1969) surfaces that before independence, the students' movement employed violent means and attacks to accomplish their targets. In this regard, a Rowlatt Committee was constituted in 1918 by the British government. The committee exposed that 68 students and 16 teachers were convicted for the crimes.

Similarly *Altbach* (1966) reveals that Students used to help Congress campaigns in freedom struggle and used to assume the leadership of the party when its leaders got arrested.

On-Campus Issues

Albatch's (1974) words are relevant to be quoted here as, "a very little attention has been given to the problems and attitudes of students. Academic institutions must understand their students and begin to deal constructively with their problems. Attitude surveys of student needs, study the conditions of activism and of the physical, psychological and academic problems being faced by the students are all important."

Where *Sarkar* (1965) tried to study all possible environmental factors supposed to be responsible for student unrest, the study by *Ross* (1969) has given more space to women teachers while throwing light upon their attitudes to students, studies and teaching styles and professional responsibilities. According to *Ross*, the major cause of student unrest inherent in the teachers coming late for their classes or do not turn up at all and when they lecture, it is often in the easiest way. The students' frustration can mostly be traced to different teachers and unprogressive teaching.

Pointing to the campus violence, *Srivastava* (1974) states that, "The University is a mechanism of stratification and preservation of differential opportunity structure. It creates a poly- segmental structure of vested interests which resort to feudalistic intrigues in driving away the Vice- Chancellors as a show of power-supremacy in the campus.....These groups are now determined to 'physically crush' the opponents. The social type is an ideal host to the germs of Rightist- revivalist politics prone to revolutionary process, reducing it to an anti university campus where prevails an acute crisis of confidence."

Upadhyaya (1975) in his study examined the intensity of the various causes of student unrest and to suggest remedies. After taking a sample of 400 students affiliated to the University of Uttar Pradesh he concluded that the causes responsible for student unrest are- inadequate teachers, defected method of teaching, indifference of authorities towards student problems, inadequate parent- teacher contact, students getting support from political parties, more stress is given on the matters of indiscipline rather than serious students, etc.

Types of Students Movement

A vivid account on students' movement in Delhi University during 1968- 1969 is presented by *T.K. Oommen* (1972) . According to him, the students' organizations can be divided as 'Voluntary and Non-Voluntary'. Where voluntary organizations are not the part of Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU), while non-voluntary organizations, in contrary, are the part of students' union. He further found in his study that DUSU elections are highly get influenced by mainstream political parties. Students of the union employ violence as major instrument to affect elections (*Oommen*, 1972; *Jayaram*, 1979).

Socio-Economic Background of the Students' Leader Engaged in Movements

A significant contribution is made by *Oommen* (1972) by studying the socio-economic background of the students' leaders engaged in students' movements in Delhi University. His study reveals that majority of student leaders are either of Hindu or Sikh religion. They are from economically well of business families. Due to this factor, he states that Left party is absent in students' politics in the campus. Looking at their academic status, majority of the students' leader are mediocre and are mostly from social science, humanities and law streams.

Students Movement during Emergency and Post- Emergency

A study by *N. Jayaram* (1979) surfaces students' movements during Emergency and Post-Emergency times. He states that not only during Emergency students' agitation was the part of off-campus politics but even in Post- Emergency scenario too students' movements were vibrant in India. He noted that in 1977, approximately 7520 incidents of students' unrest took place, out of which 1146 were violent. This is well reflected in north-eastern part of India which witnessed many student movements. In Assam, students got mobilized themselves on the issues of ethnic, lingual and cultural identity; illegal immigration in Assam; and on establishment of an oil refinery. According to *Baruah* (1999), students' movement in Assam gained momentum due to the problem of illegal immigration and to pressurize the Indian government through their measures of demonstration and protest.

Issues of Identity and Culture

Many students' movement addressed the issues of tribal identity and culture and they were organized around these issues. For example, in 1960s, the *Meghalaya Students' Association (MSA)* and *Shillong Students' Union (SSU)* came into being for demanding Meghalaya as separate state; and in

1978, *Khasi Student Union (KSU)* organized for tribal reservation in government jobs. Thus, such students' movements were advocates of tribal identity.

Similarly, on the question of identity and culture, many other regional students' movements were organized from time to time. The best example is the students' movements of Osmania University, Hyderabad, which was so powerful that it resulted in creation of the separate Telangana state in 2014. The Telangana movement stirred between two regions- the Andhra and the Telangana in 1968 over the issue of providing the 'Mulki' status to Andhra. The movement was moving with a slow pace till it became serious in 2009 due to the efforts of students at Osmania University and finally culminated in the formation of separate 'Telangana state' in 2014 (*Pathania, 2018*). Thus, the youth has the power to bring change in society.

Caste Factor in Students' Movement

According to *Jayaram, 1979*, the caste factor also plays significant role in students' movement in India. In Post emergency, there were evidences of involvement of caste element in on- campus students' unrest. The best example is *Namantar Andolan* (1978) in Marathwada University of Maharashtra. This students' movement is perhaps the longest students' movement in India which was carried on by Dalit students for approximate seventeen years for changing the name of the Marathwada University as Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University. This was done to acknowledge Dr. Ambedkar for his contributions for upliftment of weaker sections of society. He further states that as this movement got opposed by students of upper sections hence, the movement got polarized among the two categories of student and the movement became furious and violent with the government's support change the name of the University. The mass riots affected numerous Buddhist and Dalits in Maharashtra.

Caste also had its imprints on *Anti-Mandal Movement* organized by the students. According to *Kaushika* (2015), this movement has mingled the caste element in the discourse on student movement and also altered the scenario of Indian politics as with this Post-Mandal Commission period witnessed politicization of students. Thus, the incident created a borderline between prior and post Mandal commission students' movement.

Similarly, *K. Balagopal* (1990) asserted that announcement of reservation to backward classes on Mandal Commission's recommendation, triggered numerous students' movement in different parts of the country. Upper caste people and students agitated against V.P. Singh's government to take the decision back. The then prominent newspapers were filled with casteist articles such that of scholars like Arun Shourie.

T.S. Sudhir (2017) made a study on students' movement in technical institutes like IIT Madras. He reveals that at IIT Madras convocation in 1983, *P. V. Indiresan* attacked the central government for its policy of reservation and accused that due to reservation the quality of higher education institutes like IITs are degrading. In response to this an anti- student organization named as '*Ambedkar Periyar Student Circle* (APSC)' at IIT Madras was formed. This was an informal forum for discussion on issues of maintenance of equity in the institute campus. He further reveals that in May 2017, APSC organized a beef fest in reaction to the central governments notification tightening the regulation of cattle trade across the country and this resulted in violence between the two set of students at IIT Madras.

Similarly *Ajaz Ashraf* (2016), indicating to the anti- reservation protests in 2006, says that the Post 2006 phase witnessed issues of caste discrimination and conflicts in students' movement. As in 2006, the Central Government had declared to give 27% reservation to OBCs students in the admissions at Central Universities. This step dramatically changed the social composition in the campuses of central universities. The post 2006 phase created a room for reserved categories students to represent themselves in students' politics where they could raise voice on their issues and demands. According to him, in 2015-16 the number of students of reserved category –SC, ST and OBCs at JNU, New Delhi rose to 51.4% of JNU's total students.

He further asserts that such a move gave the opportunity to those sections that had never been represented in campus politics. He quotes *Richa Singh*, who became the first woman president of Allahabad University in 2015. Even the political party affiliation of students was formed, for example OBC students kept association to *Samajwadi Chatra Sabha*, while upper caste students kept affiliation to ABVP, the RSS wing. (*Ashraf, 2016*)

Thus, it can be concluded that student movements are a catalyst of change. They not only act as resistance movements against a particular government but they also beget change in the society. They have influenced not only the social but political dynamics of India. During colonial era, students'

organizations participated in freedom struggle, used violent as well as non-violent agitations against the Britishers. While in post-colonial India, the students' movement became more or less peaceful, catering the issues of *identity and culture* like that of Telangana students' movement and the student movements in Northeast India; issues of *caste and reservation* like students' movements against Mandal Commission and emergence of Ambedkarite student politics in the campuses of higher education institutes in India.

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